SELECTED PLAYS OF LADY GREGORY

Irish Drama Selections

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SELECTED PLAYS OF LADY GREGORY

chosen and with an introduction by
Mary FitzGerald

with a foreword by
Sean O'Casey

Irish Drama Selections 3

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The music for the songs in the plays can be found in the relevant volumes of *The Collected Plays*.

FOREWORD[1]

A SPRIG OF ROSEMARY AMONG THE LAUREL

BY SEAN O'CASEY

It is odd to let the imagination dwell on the group of hog-politicals talking together for a few minutes, and then deciding with an ignorant Irish hey ho nonny O, that the historic House of Coole should be pulled down and rooted up from the roof down to the cellar, and the stones to be scattered far and wide so that the House dwindled down to a place where no-one came. They tried to tear asunder, leaf by leaf, the wreath that the poet Yeats had placed upon her head, failing to realize that this was far beyond the reach of apathy, ignorance, or spite. This was the house that nourished Yeats, giving him wine, if not from the vineyard, then from a vineyard just as good; wine from abroad and honey from her own bees, honey I and she ate when breakfasting together. The house gave him great woods, a fine river, a wide lake, the majestic whirr of wild swans in flight, and evenings of peace full of the linnet's wings....

It was Lady Gregory who opened to the poet the warm welcome, spiritual and practical, of an Irish soul; it was her sympathy and help that gave the poet to Ireland, and Ireland who willy-nilly gave the great poet to the world; she should be remembered forever.

In her book *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, Lady Gregory says: 'If there was more respect for Irish things among the learned men that live in the college at Dublin, where so many of these old writings are stored, this work would not have been left to a woman of the house, that has to beminding the place, and listening to complaints, and dividing her share of food.'

In my opinion, Lady Gregory, if not a great writer, was a first-class one, and a prolific one, too. She wrote many plays and a number of books, (I wonder, at times, why Ireland's National

[1] Originally published in *Lady Gregory Selected Plays,* Chosen and Introduced by Elizabeth Coxhead (1962) and here republished by kind permission of Eileen O'Casey.

Government, such as it is, does not issue such books as *Gods and Fighting Men, Saints and Wonders, Poets and Dreamers*, and the one about Cuchulain — presenting the Hero in a far more vivid way than the figure now standing in Dublin's Post Office.)[2] Hampered as she was with the many burdens she carried about with her — her little theatre, her home, orchard, woods, the anxiety she felt for Yeats, and worst of all, the burden of bringing safely back the Lane Pictures to Dublin — considering all these, it is more than a wonder this indomitable woman squeezed out the time to leave behind such a fine amount of first-class literary work. Lady Gregory was the last but one (if we count Yeats as a Christian), and since she left, the present-day Irish Protestants in the Irish Republic have ceased to be indomitable, and aren't even interesting, for they aren't even the ghosts of those who went before them: most of them like the *siogaidthe* mentioned in Art MacCooey's song of *One-Eyed Mary*.

Since she died, there has been no whisper or remembrance given, as far as I know, to Lady Gregory; the Abbey Theatre and the Irish Academy of Letters seem to look upon her as a poor has-been; no-one even has placed a laurel wreath round the brows of the bronze head of the gallant lady in the Dublin Municipal Gallery. Perhaps it is just as well, for she was no kind of spirit to be admired by our intellectual and artistic group shivering at the shake of a clerical finger.

One gallant group, led by Michael Scott, the Architect (in more ways than one), has managed to set up a lasting memento to James Joyce. A Martello Tower where Joyce once lived, bought by Mr Scott, has been made into a museum of many things close to the life and work of the greater writer. That, at least, can be set against the scabby destruction of Coole House. No sign remembering Synge, Stephens; Yeats has his grave, and now a Summer School in his honour is held yearly in Sligo; but still none remembering Lady Gregory or George Moore. Perhaps, sometime, an Irish Government will issue stamps remembering them all; and if they don't, never mind — they will be remembered, not so much for what they handled or owned, but for what they did; which things are not writ down in water, but engraved deep on the everlasting tablets of Irish History.

Miss Coxhead has already written a fine *Life* of Augusta

[2] Now all published in the Coole Edition of Lady Gregory's writings (Colin Smythe Ltd. and Oxford University Press Inc.).

Gregory, and this book is another tribute to the great gifts which were within the body, mind, and spirit of the gallant one we recognized and knew as Lady Gregory: I commend it to all Irishmen and Irishwomen (and English and American) wherever they may be. It is a fine sprig of rosemary among the Yeatsian laurel.

Lady Gregory, mother of many books, Daughter of Ireland, daughter of wise words, of good deeds, of great humour, lover of tree and sweet herb, of beast and bird, we hail thee still! We do not wish, nor can we afford, to murmur farewell to thee for a long, long time to come.

INTRODUCTION

Except for a childhood passion for books and a nationalist penchant in politics, very little in Lady Gregory's early life indicated that she would become a prolific playwright and a founder of the Irish dramatic movement.[1] The last and least-wanted daughter among the many children of the Anglo-Irish Persses of County Galway, her birth at their Roxborough estate on the Ides of March in 1852 seemed so inauspicious at the time that she was misplaced among the bedclothes and nearly suffocated. Even her name, Isabella Augusta, was borrowed from a distant family friend: the Persse names had already been used for her older sisters. Lost among the crowd of children and lacking a familial precursor, Augusta — as she came to be known — was free to be herself. She seems to have grown up more on the edge of her Ascendency family than within it, absorbing her nurse's stories of rebellion and famine, developing a prodigious memory even for dull lessons set by her tutors, buying Fenian pamphlets from her local bookseller, taking steps to learn Irish, and immersing herself in charitable works among her father's tenants. In the process, she developed a strong affinity for the men and women who worked the land and a nationalist conviction that alarmed her sisters. Politically, she grew to be completely at odds with her family, though they seem not to have worried about the consequences: in the normal course of events this unexpected quirk in Augusta Persse's nature was not likely to amount to anything.

The normal course of events, however, was twice disrupted by chance meetings: the first made her a Lady, and the second made her Lady Gregory, playwright. Her sisters married the eligible men of rank in the county and Augusta was sent to the continent as companion to an invalid brother. There she encountered a Galway neighbour, Sir William Gregory, the retired governor of Ceylon, who was over thirty years her senior, a widower, and childless. A shared interest in books led to their marriage, and in 1880 she became Lady Gregory, mistress of Coole Park. Their child, William Robert, who would die in World War I, was born in 1881. The Gregorys travelled to Egypt and divided their time between London and Coole. Catapulted into the society of highly

educated and politically active men and women, Lady Gregory learned, she said, the art of conversation which would eventually prove useful in writing dialogue in plays, though during the years of her marriage she wrote only a few essays and poems. When Sir William died in 1892, she edited both his autobiography and his grandfather's letters for publication and began to collect folklore in Galway, in addition to managing Coole Park. She was becoming a writer, but she had, she said, "no thought of plays".

Meeting the poet William Butler Yeats in 1896 provided the impetus that made her a dramatist. They discovered a mutual interest in folklore and a mutual sympathy in Irish nationalism, and this began a literary friendship that changed the course of both their lives. During a now-famous rainy-day visit with Edward Martyn and the Comte de Basterot — both Galway neighbours — Yeats, who had written two plays and produced one in London, and Lady Gregory, who had done nothing of the kind, began to discuss producing Irish plays in Ireland. From this simple conversation, as Lady Gregory describes it in *Our Irish Theatre*, their new dramatic movement began. Thereafter, Yeats spent every summer for twenty years at Coole, and they worked together on plays in the great library with which Sir William had won his bride. The Yeats-Gregory friendship rapidly became a collaborative partnership which produced some of the finest dramatic works staged at the Abbey Theatre, and it continued until Lady Gregory's death in 1932.

Her role in the early days of the movement was comparatively modest: because of Yeats's poor eyesight, he dictated plays to her and she typed them, making suggestions for plots and dialogue as they went along. She also used her society connections to arrange financial guarantees for the Irish Literary Theatre, as the experiment was first called, and she used her political connexions to arrange passage of an act of Parliament that allowed Dublin theatres to produce brief runs of their plays without applying for official patents. In 1901, however, having served her apprenticeship in collaboration with Yeats, Douglas Hyde, and even George Moore (though he did not know that some of Yeats's corrections were really hers), Lady Gregory secretly wrote a play for schoolchildren, based on local legend, in rhyming couplets. Although she suppressed *Colman and Guaire* until near the end of her life, she had discovered — at age fifty — a new outlet for her creativity and thereafter wrote plays whenever she thought the theatre could use

them, filling the Abbey Theatre repertory with comedies, histories, and only the very occasional tragedy. By the time she died, at eighty years of age, she had published roughly thirty-five plays of her own (some revised or rewritten) and had translated or adapted others from French, German, Italian, and of course Irish. In addition, she continued to collaborate with Yeats and to a lesser extent with other Abbey playwrights, and she served as a director of the theatre, involving herself in every phase of its varied operations.

Like Yeats, she preferred the one-act play, but unlike him she experimented with longer forms as well. She introduced dialect, copied from the language of her neighbours in the Kiltartan district around Coole, to the Irish stage; and her characters are so closely copied from life that they seem more than usually authentic even when they are historical figures. Her lifelong interest in the language and the lore of the people of Galway had not only sharpened her powers of observation but had also supplied her with an almost endless store of character and incident to transform into drama. Her plays often seem to have begun with a single idea: *what if* a message delivered at a fair were passed on erroneously; *what if* two quarrelsome old neighbours who had grown used to each other were threatened with separation; *what if* a person tired of a good reputation and tried to lose it; *what if* an Irish policeman who enforces British law were faced with an escaping national hero? From such initial formulas, she would imagine how people might react in such a dilemma, sketch a brief scenario, and then write — very fluently and with hardly any hesitation — the dialogue that would logically ensue. The plays written in this way have what Ann Saddlemyer has called a "ballad structure,"[2] a folk-tale simplicity with a psychologically valid twist at the end, rather like the stories of Guy de Maupassant or O. Henry.

Not all her plays were so effortlessly constructed, however. Some underwent many revisions and others derived from multiple sources. Yeats's *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, on which she collaborated extensively, is based on a dream Yeats had and on her childhood recollection of her nurse's story of the landing of the French in 1798. Her own play, *The Rising of the Moon*, takes its title and its theme from the rebel ballad of the same name, and its story line comes from the same nurse's recollection of the escape of the outlawed Hamilton Rowan combined with a contemporary anecdote about a policeman who helped a Gaelic League organizer.[3] Sometimes her plays are dramatizations of Irish historical events, as with

the story of Brian Boru in *Kincora*, the arrival of the English in *Dervorgilla*, or the Act of Union in *The Wrens*. Her method of handling such historical episodes dramatically is to set them among ordinary folk, who are sometimes onlookers and sometimes precipators of the action. In her later years, she wrote "wonder" plays, highly imaginative dramas with fairly-tale plots and characters in which her creative impulse is free to follow its most visionary inclinations, but here again, the characters are utterly plausible human beings, even when they are supposedly giants or witches. Always, whether in tragedies or comedies, histories or fairy-tales, Lady Gregory's primary dramatic interest is in the interactions of ordinary people. That her plays have been translated into dozens of languages and played successfully in dozens of cultures attests both to the accuracy of her perception and the universality of her characters and themes: these are her great dramatic strengths.

The plays selected for this volume have been chosen from the full range of her work to show the breadth of her interest and the variety of her technique. They are arranged in the order in which she wrote them to show something of her continuing development as a dramatist. Her complete plays, edited by Ann Saddlemyer, will be found in the Coole Edition of her works, published by Colin Smythe.

The first play included here, *The Travelling Man*, resulted from collaboration with Yeats and was begun in 1902, the year after she finished *Colman and Guaire*. It grew from a chance greeting from a beggar, who thanked Lady Gregory with the wish that "the Lord will be a travelling man to you", prompting her to think *what if* a person were actually to encounter Christ. She and Yeats wrote the play together, then Yeats wrote a variant version, but she disagreed with his construction and tried the play herself, producing the miracle play printed under her name in 1905 and produced by the Abbey in 1910. Simple in structure and in technique, it indicates her preference for portraying spiritual transformation, an element in many of her other plays.

After writing an unsatisfactory short piece called *A Losing Game*, which she revised twice and abandoned in later years, Lady Gregory entered into the most productive period of her life as a dramatist. Between 1904 and 1909 she wrote twelve plays for the Abbey, in addition to translating Hermann Sudermann's *Teja* and Molière's *Les Fourbéries de Scapin* and *Le Médecin malgré lui*,

collaborating with Yeats, and completely rewriting his *Where There is Nothing* as *The Unicorn from the Stars*.[4] Eight of these plays are included in this volume: *Spreading the News, Kincora, Hyacinth Halvey, The Doctor In Spite of Himself* (from Molière), *The Gaol Gate, The Rising of the Moon, Dervorgilla,* and *The Workhouse Ward.*

Spreading the News, one of the first plays produced by the Irish National Theatre Company in its new home at the Abbey Theatre in 1904, had its genesis as an imagined tragedy of a reputation ruined by idle gossip at a fair, but Lady Gregory surrendered in writing it to the comic possibilities which rapidly began to emerge once she had assembled her characters in the village of Cloon in her own Kiltartan district. The comedy is both uproarious and inevitable as a message misheard by Mrs. Tarpey immediately becomes the basis for an elaborately wrong tale of murder and betrayal, which the audience knows to be false. Lady Gregory's most frequently anthologized one-act play, its success stems from the onstage confusion, which is both logical and incredible, and from the richness of its characterization, which has depth and range unusual in a short play. The townsfolk of Cloon lack malice but are rich in imagination, and each one adds to the story some aspect of his own nature, until poor Bartley Fallon, morosely convinced that misfortune is his inevitable fate, has the satisfaction of finding himself enmeshed in a tangle of misunderstanding, which will demand much unravelling, as the curtain falls. The play was instantly popular and it established Lady Gregory's reputation as the Abbey's first major comic dramatist.

Her next effort, in 1905, was *Kincora*, intended like *Colman and Guaire* to teach Irish history memorably in dramatic form. The play focuses on the last declining moments of the hero Brian Boru and examines how greed, infidelity, and contentiousness can undo even great men's work. The folk characterization contributes to the universality of the theme and makes the historical tragedy a contemporary metaphor. Subsequently revised, it was her first three-act play.

In early 1906, Lady Gregory turned again to comedy, inverting the formula which had worked for *Spreading the News*. *Hyacinth Halvey* frustrates its title character by having everything he does turn out right, despite his intention to destroy the excessively good reputation he has derived from exaggerated letters of recommendation written by his well-meaning friends. Like its comic

predecessor, the play is set in Cloon, and although the plot is not nearly so believable — few people set out to ruin their own reputations — the characterization keeps the humour afloat, and the play was popular with Abbey audiences and abroad.

By the terms of the Abbey patent, only Irish plays or classic masterpieces could be produced in the theatre, and so when Molière's plays were brought in as models of comedy and the existing translations proved unwieldy, Lady Gregory produced her own adaptations in Kiltartan dialect. *The Doctor In Spite of Himself*, produced in 1906, translates rather closely the dialogue and spirit of the original. In an attempt to improve authenticity, the Abbey directors incorporated even the original stage-business from the Comédie Française in the Abbey production. The influence of Molière can be seen not only in Lady Gregory's comedies from 1906 on, but also in those of other Abbey playwrights, a deliberate result of her intention to educate as well as to entertain.

Having proved her ability to handle laughter, in late 1906 Lady Gregory tried a one-act tragedy on a nationalist theme. *The Gaol Gate*, more explicit politically than her previous dramas, depicts the impact of factional strife on two women, a mother and daughter-in-law, who undergo changing emotions as they learn progressively more about their missing son and husband on their way to inquire for him at Galway gaol. The play was written according to formula, an escalating triad of intensity: they think him a traitor, they learn he is dead, and they learn ultimately that he has been executed for refusing to divulge the names of others. The nationalist slant provides an additional reversal of expectation: the women begin their quest in mourning, but they go home in triumph, proud of the sacrifice made by their man. It was her favourite play she said many years later.[5]

In the spring of 1907, Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* gave the nationalist theme a more conventionally happy ending. Based on her nurse's story of the political outlaw who was helped to freedom despite a £100 bounty on his life, it is a fine psychological study: the ballad singer gradually awakens the latent nationalist sympathies of a reluctant Irish policeman by reminding him of the rebel songs he sang in his youth. The ending is especially deft, as the suspense which has been building throughout the play culminates in a conflict between the policeman's old and new loyalties, and he falters momentarily and allows the escape. The implication

that nationalism lies at the heart of even those who ostensibly uphold the crown was deliberately intended, and the play so galvanized Abbey audiences that the directors worried about when and whether to play it in later years.

Lady Gregory followed her nationalist tragedy and comedy in late 1907 with a nationalist folk-history play. *Dervorgilla* treats the question of the English presence in Ireland from the perspective of "the swift, unflinching, terrible judgment of the young" upon the woman whose infidelity to her husband resulted in the coming of the English into Ireland. But it is more than a brief for nationalism, as it provides a study of youth and age: Dervorgilla's youthful passion, which she has lived long enough to regret, has made her a figure of infamy in her own lifetime, and the young men and women who repudiate her in old age are oblivious to the suffering she has endured, in part because they are too young to understand the remorse she feels.

In 1908, Lady Gregory wrote another of her highly popular comedies, *The Workhouse Ward*, orginially a collaboration with Douglas Hyde on a Gaelic play which she translated as *The Poorhouse*. Although it has been read allegorically[6] — as quarrelling Ireland faced with England's generosity or as quarrelling Irish politicians spiting their mother country — it works best on its simplest level, the story of two cantankerous old men who need to fight with each other for companionship. The benevolent sister who offers to take one of them home ironically threatens peace in this harmoniously contentious world, and when she is driven off in disgust, the men resume their argument to reassure themselves and the audience that life has returned to normal. Rarely has comic inversion been used to better effect.

In the years after 1910, Lady Gregory wrote more than twenty additional plays, many of them more ambitious than one-act comedies or tragedies. Some of them handle familiar themes, like *The Wrens*, and others break new ground in structure, style, or theme, like *Grania, The Golden Apple* or *The Story Brought by Brigit*.

In 1912, Lady Gregory experimented with a three-act drama involving only three characters. *Grania*, based on a classic and tragic romantic triangle in Irish legend, had such strong autobiographical significance for its author that she did not allow its production during her lifetime and thereby denied herself the opportunity to modify it according to the demands of staging and

of acting. It is, however, a powerful play which contains some of her most lyric speeches and an intimate understanding of the complexities of love between the young and old.

The Golden Apple, however, marks a real departure in style and theme. Like its predecessor, *The Dragon*, produced in 1919, *The Golden Apple* is a fairy tale come to life. Written in Lady Gregory's sixty-ninth year, and intended primarily for children, it delights even adults with its luminous simplicity. In this mythological world, questing for justice brings good results. It is a fable of peace and of possibility, made believable by suspenseful plotting and imaginative characterization.

The Story Brought by Brigit, produced four years later in 1924, applies fable to the biblical account of Christ's death. It is Lady Gregory's version of the passion play, told through the eyes of the Irish saint whose ancient identity was that of fire-goddess. Unlike her other plays, which are based on story lines derived from Irish history or invented by her, *The Story Brought by Brigit* shows how Lady Gregory's dramatic skills enabled her to infuse even well-known events with renewed suspense and power. Written near the end of her career, it was a play she had waited to do until she felt she could give it the best of her art, and it has moved audiences and readers alike. The folk quality supplied by Brigit's perspective gives new intensity to the tableau, and the lesser characters provide her usual study in psychology while they act as audience intermediaries.

The last play in this volume is the last play Lady Gregory published, *Dave*. Produced in May, 1927 — almost exactly five years before her death — it covers much the same ground as *The Travelling Man* written twenty-five years earlier, but from the vantage point of the certainty of death. The play argues that paradise surrounds us, even in the hearts of outcasts, and has only to be invoked. Worth is measured not in name or in lineage or in personal wealth, but in service to humanity. Familiar themes and characters appear in *Dave*: justice triumphs, the downtrodden are set free, the individual is transformed. But the characters are more abstract than formerly, and the plot seems somewhat more contrived. Although she allowed the play to be produced and to be published, Lady Gregory published no more new plays after *Dave*, preferring instead to translate and to collaborate with Yeats as much as her failing health would allow and to attempt a series of dramatic 'eclogues'.

After her death in 1932, her popularity suffered an inevitable decline, though her comedies continued to be performed by little theatre groups around the world, and her one-act plays continued to be analyzed in colleges and universities. It is this which Sean O'Casey laments in his introduction to the first selection of her plays, reprinted as the foreword to this volume. Happily, the recent renewal of interest in her work, spurred by the availability of her prose and plays in the Coole Edition, should bring about new productions of Lady Gregory. Irish drama is greatly in her debt — the Abbey Theatre might have died in infancy without her relentless work on its behalf and without the lightness of her plays to leaven the seriousness of others' — and readers in many lands have been thankful for her.

Mary FitzGerald

NOTES

[1] Except where otherwise indicated, information in this introduction derives from Lady Gregory's *Our Irish Theatre* (New York and London: Putnam's 1913; Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1972), *Seventy Years* (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1974), and *Lady Gregory's Journals*, Volume I, ed. Daniel J. Murphy (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1978).

[2] *The Wonder and Supernatural Plays of Lady Gregory*, ed. Ann Saddlemyer (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1971, p. ix. Although the title pages of the *Collected Plays* state that the books were published in 1970, due to a strike at the printers they were not published until 1 March 1981.)

[3] Lady Gregory's unpublished Journal, 23 April 1929.

[4] Lady Gregory's unpublished Diary, 4 June 1909.

[5] In a copy of *The Gaol Gate* inscribed to Mrs. Molly Childers (the widow of Erskine Childers, 1870-1922) dated Xmas 1928, Lady Gregory wrote "This the little play I love best for you".

[6] See *The Comedies of Lady Gregory*, ed. Ann Saddlemyer (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1971), pp. 299-304, for an allegorical parody of the play. Lady Gregory's comments on the play, reprinted in this volume, suggest that she may have intended an allegorical reading.

THE TRAVELLING MAN

A MIRACLE PLAY

PERSONS
A MOTHER.
A CHILD.
A TRAVELLING MAN.

SCENE. *A cottage kitchen. A woman setting out a bowl and jug and board on the table for breadmaking.*

CHILD. What is it you are going to make, mother?

MOTHER. I am going to make a grand cake with white flour. Seeds I will put in it. Maybe I'll make a little cake for yourself too. You can be baking it in the little pot while the big one will be baking in the big pot.

CHILD. It is a pity daddy to be away at the fair on a Samhain night.

MOTHER. I must make my feast all the same, for Samhain night is more to me than to any other one. It was on this night seven years I first came into this house.

CHILD. You will be taking down those plates from the dresser so, those plates with flowers on them, and be putting them on the table.

MOTHER. I will. I will set out the house to-day, and bring down the best delf, and put whatever thing is best on the table, because of the great thing that happened me seven years ago.

CHILD. What great thing was that?

MOTHER. I was after being driven out of the house where I was a serving girl. . . .

CHILD. Where was that house? Tell me about it.

MOTHER (*sitting down and pointing southward*). It is over there I was living, in a farmer's house up on Slieve Echtge, near to Slieve na n-Or, the Golden Mountain.

CHILD. The Golden Mountain! That must be a grand place.

MOTHER. Not very grand indeed, but bare and cold enough at that time of the year. Anyway, I was driven out a Samhain day like this, because of some things that were said against me.

CHILD. What did you do then?

MOTHER. What had I to do but to go walking the bare bog road through the rough hills where there was no shelter to find, and the sharp wind going through me, and the red mud heavy on my shoes. I came to Kilbecanty. . . .

CHILD. I know Kilbecanty. That is where the woman in the shop gave me sweets out of a bottle.

MOTHER. So she might now, but that night her door was shut and all the doors were shut; and I saw through the windows the boys and the girls sitting round the hearth and playing their games, and I had no courage to ask for shelter. In dread I was they might think some shameful thing of me, and I going the road alone in the night-time.

CHILD. Did you come here after that?

MOTHER. I went on down the hill in the darkness, and with the dint of my trouble and the length of the road my strength failed me, and I had like to fall. So I did fall at the last, meeting with a heap of broken stones by the roadside.

CHILD. I hurt my knee one time I fell on the stones.

MOTHER. It was then the great thing happened. I saw a stranger coming towards me, a very tall man, the best I ever saw, bright and shining that you could see him through the darkness; and I knew him to be no common man.

CHILD. Who was he?

MOTHER. It is what I thought, that he was the King of the World.

CHILD. Had he a crown like a King?

MOTHER. If he had, it was made of the twigs of a bare blackthorn; but in his hand he had a green branch, that never grew on a tree of this world. He took me by the hand, and he led me over the stepping-stones outside to this door, and he bade me to go in and I would find good shelter. I was kneeling down to thank him, but he raised me up and he said, "I will come to see you some other time. And do not shut up your heart in the things I give you," he said, "but have a welcome before me."

CHILD. Did he go away then?

MOTHER. I saw him no more after that, but I did as he bade me. (*She stands up and goes to the door.*) I came in like this, and your father was sitting there by the hearth, a lonely man that was after losing his wife. He was alone and I was alone, and we married one another; and I never wanted since for shelter or safety. And a good wife I made him, and a good housekeeper.

CHILD. Will the King come again to the house?

MOTHER. I have his word for it he will come, but he did not come yet; it is often your father and myself looked out the door of a Samhain night, thinking to see him.

CHILD. I hope he won't come in the night time, and I asleep.

MOTHER. It is of him I do be thinking every year, and I setting out the house, and making a cake for the supper.

CHILD. What will he do when he comes in?

MOTHER. He will sit over there in the chair, and maybe he will taste a bit of the cake. I will call in all the neighbours; I will tell them he is here. They will not be keeping it in their mind against me then that I brought nothing, coming to the house. They will know I am before any of them, the time they know who it is has come to visit me. They will all kneel down and ask for his blessing. But the best blessing will be on the house he came to of himself.

CHILD. And are you going to make the cake now?

MOTHER. I must make it now indeed, or I will be late with it. I am late as it is; I was expecting one of the neighbours to bring me white flour from the town. I'll wait no longer, I'll go borrow it in some place. There will be a wedding in the stonecutter's house Thursday, it's likely there will be flour in the house.

CHILD. Let me go along with you.

MOTHER. It is best for you to stop here. Be a good child now, and don't be meddling with the things on the table. Sit down there by the hearth and break up those little sticks I am after bringing in. Make a little heap of them now before me, and we will make a good fire to bake the cake. See now how many will you break. Don't go out the door while I'm away, I would be in dread of you going near the river and it in flood. Behave yourself well now. Be counting the sticks as you break them.

(*She goes out.*)

CHILD (*sitting down and breaking sticks across his knee*). One—and two—O I can break this one into a great many, one, two, three, four.—This one is wet—I don't like a wet one—five, six—that is a great heap.—Let me try that great big one.—That is too hard.—I don't think mother could break that one.—Daddy could break it.

(*Half-door is opened and a* TRAVELLING MAN *comes in. He wears a ragged white flannel shirt, and mud-stained trousers. He is bareheaded and barefooted, and carries a little branch in his hand.*)

TRAVELLING MAN (*stooping over the child and taking the stick*). Give it here to me and hold this.

(*He puts the branch in the* CHILD'S *hand while he takes the stick and breaks it.*)

CHILD. That is a good branch, apples on it and flowers. The tree at the mill has apples yet, but all the flowers are gone. Where did you get this branch?

TRAVELLING MAN. I got it in a garden a long way off.

CHILD. Where is the garden? Where do you come from?

TRAVELLING MAN (*pointing southward*). I have come from beyond those hills.

CHILD. Is it from the Golden Mountain you are come? From Slieve na n-Or?

TRAVELLING MAN. That is where I come from surely, from the Golden Mountain. I would like to sit down and rest for a while.

CHILD. Sit down here beside me. We must not go near the table or touch anything, or mother will be angry. Mother is going to make a beautiful cake, a cake that willl be fit for a King that might be coming in to our supper.

TRAVELLING MAN. I will sit here with you on the floor.

(*Sits down.*)

CHILD. Tell me now about the Golden Mountain.

TRAVELLING MAN. There is a garden in it, and there is a tree in the garden that has fruit and flowers at the one time.

CHILD. Like this branch?

TRAVELLING MAN. Just like that little branch.

CHILD. What other things are in the garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are birds of all colours that sing at every hour, the way the people will come to their prayers. And there is a high wall about the garden.

CHILD. What way can the people get through the wall?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are four gates in the wall: a gate of gold, and a gate of silver, and a gate of crystal, and a gate of white brass.

CHILD (*taking up the sticks*). I will make a garden. I will make a wall with these sticks.

TRAVELLING MAN. This big stick will make the first wall.

(*They build a square wall with sticks.*)

CHILD (*taking up branch*). I will put this in the middle. This is the tree. I will get something to make it stand up. (*Gets up and looks at dresser.*) I can't reach it, get up and give me that shining jug.

(TRAVELLING MAN *gets up and gives him the jug.*)

TRAVELLING MAN. Here it is for you.

CHILD (*puts it within the walls and sets the branch in it*). Tell me something else that is in the garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are four wells of water in it, that are as clear as glass.

CHILD. Get me down those cups, those flowery cups, we will put them for wells. (*He hands them down.*) Now I will make the gates, give me those plates for gates, not those ugly ones, those nice one at the top.

(*He takes them down and they put them on the four sides for gates. The* CHILD *gets up and looks at it.*)

TRAVELLING MAN. There now, it is finished.

CHILD. Is it as good as the other garden? How can we go to the Golden Mountain to see the other garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. We can ride to it.

CHILD. But we have no horse.

TRAVELLING MAN. This form will be our horse. (*He draws a form out of the corner, and sits down astride on it, putting the* CHILD *before him.*) Now, off we go! (*Sings, the* CHILD *repeating the refrain*)—

Come ride and ride to the garden,
  Come ride and ride with a will:
For the flower comes with the fruit there
  Beyond a hill and a hill.

Refrain

Come ride and ride to the garden,
  Come ride like the March wind;
There's barley there, and water there,
  And stabling to your mind.

TRAVELLING MAN. How did you like that ride, little horseman?

CHILD. Go on again! I want another ride!

TRAVELLING MAN (*sings*)—

The Archangels stand in a row there
  And all the garden bless,
The Archangel Axel, Victor the angel
  Work at the cider press.

Refrain

Come ride and ride to the garden, &c.

CHILD. We will soon be at the Golden Mountain now. Ride again. Sing another song.

TRAVELLING MAN (*sings*)—

O scent of the broken apples!
O shuffling of holy shoes!
Beyond a hill and a hill there
In the land that no one knows.

Refrain

Come ride and ride to the garden, &c.

CHILD. Now another ride.

TRAVELLING MAN. This will be the last. It will be a good ride.

(*The* MOTHER *comes in. She stares for a second, then throws down her basket and snatches up the child.*)

MOTHER. Did ever anyone see the like of that! A common beggar, a travelling man off the roads, to be holding the child! To be leaving his ragged arms about him as if he was of his own sort! Get out of that, whoever you are, and quit this house or I'll call to some that will make you quit it.

CHILD. Do not send him out! He is not a bad man; he is a good man; he was playing horses with me. He has grand songs.

MOTHER. Let him get away out of this now, himself and his share of songs. Look at the way he has your bib destroyed that I was after washing in the morning!

CHILD. He was holding me on the horse. We were riding, I might have fallen. He held me.

MOTHER. I give you my word you are done now with riding horses. Let him go on his road. I have no time to be cleaning the place after the like of him.

CHILD. He is tired. Let him stop here till evening.

TRAVELLING MAN. Let me rest here for a while, I have been travelling a long way.

MOTHER. Where did you come from to-day?

TRAVELLING MAN. I came over Slieve Echtge from Slieve na n-Or. I had no house to stop in. I walked the long bog road, the wind was going through me, there was no shelter to be got, the red mud of the road was heavy on my feet. I got no welcome in the villages, and so I came on to this place, to the rising of the river at Ballylee.

MOTHER. It is best for you to go on to the town. It is not far for you to go. We will maybe have company coming in here.

(*She pours out flour into a bowl and begins mixing.*)

TRAVELLING MAN. Will you give me a bit of that dough to bring with me? I have gone a long time fasting.

MOTHER. It is not often in the year I make bread like this. There are a few cold potatoes on the dresser, are they not good enough for you? There is many a one would be glad to get them.

TRAVELLING MAN. Whatever you will give me, I will take it.

MOTHER (*going to the dresser for the potatoes and looking at the shelves*). What in the earthly world has happened all the delf? Where are the jugs gone and the plates? They were all in it when I went out a while ago.

CHILD (*hanging his head*). We were making a garden with them. We were making that garden there in the corner.

MOTHER. Is that what you were doing after I bidding you to sit still and to keep yourself quiet? It is to tie you in the chair I will another time! My grand jugs! (*She picks them up and wipes them.*) My plates that I bought the first time I ever went marketing into Gort. The best in the shop they were. (*One slips from her hand and breaks.*) Look at that now, look what you are after doing.

(*She gives a slap at the child.*)

TRAVELLING MAN. Do not blame the child. It was I myself took them down from the dresser.

MOTHER (*turning on him*). It was you took them! What business had you doing that? It's the last time a tramp or a tinker or a rogue of the roads will have a chance of laying his hand on anything in this house. It is jailed you should be! What did you want touching the dresser at all? Is it looking you were for what you could bring away?

TRAVELLING MAN (*taking the* CHILD'S *hands*). I would not refuse these hands that were held out for them. If it was for the four winds of the world he had asked, I would have put their bridles into these innocent hands.

MOTHER (*taking up the jug and throwing the branch on the floor*). Get out of this! Get out of this I tell you! There is no shelter here for the like of you! Look at that mud on the floor! You are not fit to come into the house of any decent respectable person!

(*The room begins to darken.*)

TRAVELLING MAN. Indeed, I am more used to the roads than to the shelter of houses. It is often I have spent the night on the bare hills.

MOTHER. No wonder in that! (*She begins to sweep floor.*) Go out of this now to whatever company you are best used to, whatever they are. The worst of people it is likely they are, thieves and drunkards and shameless women.

TRAVELLING MAN. Maybe so. Drunkards and thieves and shameless women, stones that have fallen, that are trodden under foot, bodies that are worn with fasting, minds that are broken with much sinning, the poor, the mad, the bad. . . .

MOTHER. Get out with you! Go back to your friends, I say!

TRAVELLING MAN. I will go. I will go back to the high road that is walked by the bare feet of the poor, by the innocent bare feet of children. I will go back to the rocks and the wind, to the cries of the trees in the storm! (*He goes out.*)

CHILD. He has forgotten his branch!

(*Takes it and follows him.*)

MOTHER (*still sweeping*). My good plates from the dresser, and dirty red mud on the floor, and the sticks all scattered in every place. (*Stoops to pick them up.*) Where is the child gone? (*Goes to door.*) I don't see him—he couldn't have gone to the river—it is getting dark—the bank is slippy. Come back! Come back! Where are you? (CHILD *runs in.*)

MOTHER. O where were you? I was in dread it was to the river you were gone, or into the river.

CHILD. I went after him. He is gone over the river.

MOTHER. He couldn't do that. He couldn't go through the flood.

CHILD. He did go over it. He was as if walking on the water. There was a light before his feet.

MOTHER. That could not be so. What put that thought in your mind?

CHILD. I called to him to come back for the branch, and he turned where he was in the river, and he bade me to bring it back, and to show it to yourself.

MOTHER (*taking the branch*). There are fruit and flowers on it. It is a branch that is not of any earthly tree. (*Falls on her knees.*) He is gone, he is gone, and I never knew him! He was that stranger that gave me all! He is the King of the World!

Curtain.

SPREADING THE NEWS

PERSONS

BARTLEY FALLON.
MRS. FALLON.
JACK SMITH.
SHAWN EARLY.
TIM CASEY.
JAMES RYAN.
MRS. TARPEY.
MRS. TULLY.
A Policeman (JO MULDOON).
A REMOVABLE MAGISTRATE.

SCENE. *The outskirts of a Fair. An Apple Stall.* MRS. TARPEY *sitting at it.* MAGISTRATE *and* POLICEMAN *enter.*

MAGISTRATE. So that is the Fair Green. Cattle and sheep and mud. No system. What a repulsive sight!

POLICEMAN. That is so, indeed.

MAGISTRATE. I suppose there is a good deal of disorder in this place?

POLICEMAN. There is.

MAGISTRATE. Common assault?

POLICEMAN. It's common enough.

MAGISTRATE. Agrarian crime, no doubt?

POLICEMAN. That is so.

MAGISTRATE. Boycotting? Maiming of cattle? Firing into houses?

POLICEMAN. There was one time, and there might be again.

MAGISTRATE. That is bad. Does it go any farther than that?

POLICEMAN. Far enough, indeed.

MAGISTRATE. Homicide, then! This district has been shamefully neglected! I will change all that. When I was in the Andaman Islands, my system never failed. Yes, yes, I will change all that. What has that woman on her stall?

POLICEMAN. Apples mostly—and sweets.

MAGISTRATE. Just see if there are any unlicensed goods under-

neath—spirits or the like. We had evasions of the salt tax in the Andaman Islands.

POLICEMAN (*sniffing cautiously and upsetting a heap of apples*). I see no spirits here—or salt.

MAGISTRATE (*to* MRS. TARPEY). Do you know this town well, my good woman?

MRS. TARPEY (*holding out some apples*). A penny the half-dozen, your honour.

POLICEMAN (*shouting*). The gentleman is asking do you know the town! He's the new magistrate!

MRS. TARPEY (*rising and ducking*). Do I know the town? I do, to be sure.

MAGISTRATE (*shouting*). What is its chief business?

MRS. TARPEY. Business, is it? What business would the people here have but to be minding one another's business?

MAGISTRATE. I mean what trade have they?

MRS. TARPEY. Not a trade. No trade at all but to be talking.

MAGISTRATE. I shall learn nothing here.

(JAMES RYAN *comes in, pipe in mouth. Seeing* MAGISTRATE *he retreats quickly, taking pipe from mouth.*)

MAGISTRATE. The smoke from that man's pipe had a greenish look; he may be growing unlicensed tobacco at home. I wish I had brought my telescope to this district. Come to the post-office, I will telegraph for it. I found it very useful in the Andaman Islands.

(MAGISTRATE *and* POLICEMAN *go out left.*)

MRS. TARPEY. Bad luck to Jo Muldoon, knocking my apples this way and that way. (*Begins arranging them.*) Showing off he was to the new magistrate.

(*Enter* BARTLEY FALLON *and* MRS. FALLON.)

BARTLEY. Indeed it's a poor country and a scarce country to be living in. But I'm thinking if I went to America it's long ago the day I'd be dead!

MRS. FALLON. So you might, indeed.

(*She puts her basket on a barrel and begins putting parcels in it, taking them from under her cloak.*)

BARTLEY. And it's a great expense for a poor man to be buried in America.

MRS. FALLON. Never fear, Bartley Fallon, but I'll give you a good burying the day you'll die.

BARTLEY. Maybe it's yourself will be buried in the graveyard of Cloonmara before me, Mary Fallon, and I myself that will be dying unbeknownst some night, and no one a-near me. And the cat itself

may be gone straying through the country, and the mice squealing over the quilt.

MRS. FALLON. Leave off talking of dying. It might be twenty years you'll be living yet.

BARTLEY (*with a deep sigh*). I'm thinking if I'll be living at the end of twenty years, it's a very old man I'll be then!

MRS. TARPEY (*turns and sees them*). Good morrow, Bartley Fallon; good morrow, Mrs. Fallon. Well, Bartley, you'll find no cause for complaining to-day; they are all saying it was a good fair.

BARTLEY (*raising his voice*). It was not a good fair, Mrs. Tarpey. It was a scattered sort of a fair. If we didn't expect more, we got less. That's the way with me always; whatever I have to sell goes down and whatever I have to buy goes up. If there's ever any misfortune coming to this world, it's on myself it pitches, like a flock of crows on seed potatoes.

MRS. FALLON. Leave off talking of misfortunes, and listen to Jack Smith that is coming the way, and he singing.

(*Voice of* JACK SMITH *heard singing:*)

I thought, my first love,
  There'd be but one house between you and me,
And I thought I would find
  Yourself coaxing my child on your knee.
Over the tide
  I would leap with the leap of a swan,
Till I came to the side
  Of the wife of the Red-haired man!

(JACK SMITH *comes in; he is a red-haired man, and is carrying a hayfork.*)

MRS. TARPEY. That should be a good song if I had my hearing.

MRS. FALLON (*shouting*). It's "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

MRS. TARPEY. I know it well. That's the song that has a skin on it!

(*She turns her back to them and goes on arranging her apples.*)

MRS. FALLON. Where's herself, Jack Smith?

JACK SMITH. She was delayed with her washing; bleaching the clothes on the hedge she is, and she daren't leave them, with all the tinkers that do be passing to the fair. It isn't to the fair I came myself, but up to the Five Acre Meadow I'm going, where I have a contract for the hay. We'll get a share of it into tramps to-day. (*He lays down hayfork and lights his pipe.*)

BARTLEY. You will not get it into tramps to-day. The rain will

be down on it by evening, and on myself too. It's seldom I ever started on a journey but the rain would come down on me before I'd find any place of shelter.

JACK SMITH. If it didn't itself, Bartley, it is my belief you would carry a leaky pail on your head in place of a hat, the way you'd not be without some cause of complaining.

(*A voice heard, "Go on, now, go on out o' that. Go on I say."*)

JACK SMITH. Look at that young mare of Pat Ryan's that is backing into Shaughnessy's bullocks with the dint of the crowd! Don't be daunted, Pat, I'll give you a hand with her.

(*He goes out, leaving his hayfork.*)

MRS. FALLON. It's time for ourselves to be going home. I have all I bought put in the basket. Look at there, Jack Smith's hayfork he left after him! He'll be wanting it. (*Calls.*) Jack Smith! Jack Smith! —He's gone through the crowd—hurry after him, Bartley, he'll be wanting it.

BARTLEY. I'll do that. This is no safe place to be leaving it. (*He takes up fork awkwardly and upsets the basket.*) Look at that now! If there is any basket in the fair upset, it must be our own basket!

(*He goes out to right.*)

MRS. FALLON. Get out of that! It is your own fault, it is. Talk of misfortunes and misfortunes will come. Glory be! Look at my new egg-cups rolling in every part—and my two pound of sugar with the paper broke——

MRS. TARPEY (*turning from stall*). God help us, Mrs. Fallon, what happened your basket?

MRS. FALLON. It's himself that knocked it down, bad manners to him. (*Putting things up.*) My grand sugar that's destroyed, and he'll not drink his tea without it. I had best go back to the shop for more, much good may it do him!

(*Enter* TIM CASEY.)

TIM CASEY. Where is Bartley Fallon, Mrs. Fallon? I want a word with him before he'll leave the fair. I was afraid he might have gone home by this, for he's a temperate man.

MRS. FALLON. I wish he did go home! It'd be best for me if he went home straight from the fair green, or if he never came with me at all? Where is he, is it? He's gone up the road (*jerks elbow*) following Jack Smith with a hayfork.

(*She goes out to left.*)

TIM CASEY. Following Jack Smith with a hayfork! Did ever any one hear the like of that. (*Shouts.*) Did you hear that news, Mrs. Tarpey?

MRS. TARPEY. I heard no news at all.

TIM CASEY. Some dispute I suppose it was that rose between Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon, and it seems Jack made off, and Bartley is following him with a hayfork!

MRS. TARPEY. Is he now? Well, that was quick work! It's not ten minutes since the two of them were here, Bartley going home and Jack going to the Five Acre Meadow; and I had my apples to settle up, that Jo Muldoon of the police had scattered, and when I looked round again Jack Smith was gone, and Bartley Fallon was gone, and Mrs. Fallon's basket upset, and all in it strewed upon the ground—the tea here—the two pound of sugar there—the egg-cups there—Look, now, what a great hardship the deafness puts upon me, that I didn't hear the commincement of the fight! Wait till I tell James Ryan that I see below; he is a neighbour of Bartley's, it would be a pity if he wouldn't hear the news!

(*She goes out. Enter* SHAWN EARLY *and* MRS. TULLY.)

TIM CASEY. Listen, Shawn Early! Listen, Mrs. Tully, to the news! Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon had a falling out, and Jack knocked Mrs. Fallon's basket into the road, and Bartley made an attack on him with a hayfork, and away with Jack, and Bartley after him. Look at the sugar here yet on the road!

SHAWN EARLY. Do you tell me so? Well, that's a queer thing, and Bartley Fallon so quiet a man!

MRS. TULLY. I wouldn't wonder at all. I would never think well of a man that would have that sort of a mouldering look. It's likely he has overtaken Jack by this.

(*Enter* JAMES RYAN *and* MRS. TARPEY.)

JAMES RYAN. That is great news Mrs. Tarpey was telling me! I suppose that's what brought the police and the magistrate up this way. I was wondering to see them in it a while ago.

SHAWN EARLY. The police after them? Bartley Fallon must have injured Jack so. They wouldn't meddle in a fight that was only for show!

MRS. TULLY. Why wouldn't he injure him? There was many a man killed with no more of a weapon than a hayfork.

JAMES RYAN. Wait till I run north as far as Kelly's bar to spread the news! (*He goes out.*)

TIM CASEY. I'll go tell Jack Smith's first cousin that is standing there south of the church after selling his lambs. (*Goes out.*)

MRS. TULLY. I'll go telling a few of the neighbours I see beyond to the west. (*Goes out.*)

SHAWN EARLY. I'll give word of it beyond at the east of the green.

(*Is going out when* MRS. TARPEY *seizes hold of him.*)

MRS. TARPEY. Stop a minute, Shawn Early, and tell me did you see red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary, in any place?

SHAWN EARLY. I did. At her own house she was, drying clothes on the hedge as I passed.

MRS. TARPEY. What did you say she was doing?

SHAWN EARLY (*breaking away*). Laying out a sheet on the hedge. (*He goes.*)

MRS. TARPEY. Laying out a sheet for the dead! The Lord have mercy on us! Jack Smith dead, and his wife laying out a sheet for his burying! (*Calls out.*) Why didn't you tell me that before, Shawn Early? Isn't the deafness the great hardship? Half the world might be dead without me knowing of it or getting word of it at all! (*She sits down and rocks herself.*) O my poor Jack Smith! To be going to his work so nice and so hearty, and to be left stretched on the ground in the full light of the day!

(*Enter* TIM CASEY.)

TIM CASEY. What is it, Mrs. Tarpey? What happened since?

MRS. TARPEY. O my poor Jack Smith!

TIM CASEY. Did Bartley overtake him?

MRS. TARPEY. O the poor man!

TIM CASEY. Is it killed he is?

MRS. TARPEY. Stretched in the Five Acre Meadow!

TIM CASEY. The Lord have mercy on us! Is that a fact?

MRS. TARPEY. Without the rites of the Church or a ha'porth!

TIM CASEY. Who was telling you?

MRS. TARPEY. And the wife laying out a sheet for his corpse. (*Sits up and wipes her eyes.*) I suppose they'll wake him the same as another?

(*Enter* MRS. TULLY, SHAWN EARLY, *and* JAMES RYAN.)

MRS. TULLY. There is great talk about this work in every quarter of the fair.

MRS. TARPEY. Ochone! cold and dead. And myself maybe the last he was speaking to!

JAMES RYAN. The Lord save us! Is it dead he is?

TIM CASEY. Dead surely, and the wife getting provision for the wake.

SHAWN EARLY. Well, now, hadn't Bartley Fallon great venom in him?

MRS. TULLY. You may be sure he had some cause. Why would

he have made an end of him if he had not? (*To* MRS. TARPEY, *raising her voice.*) What was it rose the dispute at all, Mrs. Tarpey?

MRS. TARPEY. Not a one of me knows. The last I saw of them, Jack Smith was standing there, and Bartley Fallon was standing there, quiet and easy, and he listening to "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

MRS. TULLY. Do you hear that, Tim Casey? Do you hear that, Shawn Early and James Ryan? Bartley Fallon was here this morning listening to red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary that was! Listening to her and whispering with her! It was she started the fight so!

SHAWN EARLY. She must have followed him from her own house. It is likely some person roused him.

TIM CASEY. I never knew, before, Bartley Fallon was great with Jack Smith's wife.

MRS. TULLY. How would you know it? Sure it's not in the streets they would be calling it. If Mrs. Fallon didn't know of it, and if I that have the next house to them didn't know of it, and if Jack Smith himself didn't know of it, it is not likely you would know of it, Tim Casey.

SHAWN EARLY. Let Bartley Fallon take charge of her from this out so, and let him provide for her. It is little pity she will get from any person in this parish.

TIM CASEY. How can he take charge of her? Sure he has a wife of his own. Sure you don't think he'd turn souper and marry her in a Protestant church?

JAMES RYAN. It would be easy for him to marry her if he brought her to America.

SHAWN EARLY. With or without Kitty Keary, believe me it is for America he's making at this minute. I saw the new magistrate and Jo Muldoon of the police going into the post-office as I came up—there was hurry on them—you may be sure it was to telegraph they went, the way he'll be stopped in the docks at Queenstown!

MRS. TULLY. It's likely Kitty Keary is gone with him, and not minding a sheet or a wake at all. The poor man, to be deserted by his own wife, and the breath hardly gone out yet from his body that is lying bloody in the field!

(*Enter* MRS. FALLON.)

MRS. FALLON. What is it the whole of the town is talking about? And what is it you yourselves are talking about? Is it about my man Bartley Fallon you are talking? Is it lies about him you are

telling, saying that he went killing Jack Smith? My grief that ever he came into this place at all!

JAMES RYAN. Be easy now, Mrs. Fallon. Sure there is no one at all in the whole fair but is sorry for you!

MRS. FALLON. Sorry for me, is it? Why would any one be sorry for me? Let you be sorry for yourselves, and that there may be shame on you for ever and at the day of judgment, for the words you are saying and the lies you are telling to take away the character of my poor man, and to take the good name off of him, and to drive him to destruction! That is what you are doing!

SHAWN EARLY. Take comfort now, Mrs. Fallon. The police are not so smart as they think. Sure he might give them the slip yet, the same as Lynchehaun.

MRS. TULLY. If they do get him, and if they do put a rope around his neck, there is no one can say he does not deserve it!

MRS. FALLON. Is that what you are saying, Bridget Tully, and is that what you think? I tell you it's too much talk you have, making yourself out to be such a great one, and to be running down every respectable person! A rope, is it? It isn't much of a rope was needed to tie up your own furniture the day you came into Martin Tully's house, and you never bringing as much as a blanket, or a penny, or a suit of clothes with you and I myself bringing seventy pounds and two feather beds. And now you are stiffer than a woman would have a hundred pounds! It is too much talk the whole of you have. A rope is it? I tell you the whole of this town is full of liars and schemers that would hang you up for half a glass of whiskey. (*Turning to go.*) People they are you wouldn't believe as much as daylight from without you'd get up to have a look at it yourself. Killing Jack Smith indeed! Where are you at all, Bartley, till I bring you out of this? My nice quiet little man! My decent comrade! He that is as kind and as harmless as an innocent beast of the field! He'll be doing no harm at all if he'll shed the blood of some of you after this day's work! That much would be no harm at all. (*Calls out*) Bartley! Bartley Fallon! Where are you? (*Going out.*) Did any one see Bartley Fallon?

(*All turn to look after her.*)

JAMES RYAN. It is hard for her to believe any such a thing, God help her!

(*Enter* BARTLEY FALLON *from right, carrying hayfork.*)

BARTLEY. It is what I often said to myself, if there is ever any misfortune coming to this world it is on myself it is sure to come!

(*All turn round and face him.*)

BARTLEY. To be going about with this fork and to find no one to take it, and no place to leave it down, and I wanting to be gone out of this—Is that you, Shawn Early? (*Holds out fork.*) It's well I met you. You have no call to be leaving the fair for a while the way I have, and how can I go till I'm rid of this fork? Will you take it and keep it until such time as Jack Smith——

SHAWN EARLY (*backing*). I will not take it, Bartley Fallon, I'm very thankful to you!

BARTLEY (*turning to apple stall*). Look at it now, Mrs. Tarpey, it was here I got it; let me thrust it in under the stall. It will lie there safe enough, and no one will take notice of it until such time as Jack Smith——

MRS. TARPEY. Take your fork out of that! Is it to put trouble on me and to destroy me you want? putting it there for the police to be rooting it out maybe. (*Thrusts him back.*)

BARTLEY. That is a very unneighbourly thing for you to do, Mrs. Tarpey. Hadn't I enough care on me with that fork before this, running up and down with it like the swinging of a clock, and afeard to lay it down in any place! I wish I never touched it or meddled with it at all!

JAMES RYAN. It is a pity, indeed, you ever did.

BARTLEY. Will you yourself take it, James Ryan? You were always a neighbourly man.

JAMES RYAN(*backing*).There is many a thing I would do for you, Bartley Fallon, but I won't do that!

SHAWN EARLY. I tell you there is no man will give you any help or any encouragement for this day's work. If it was something agrarian now—

BARTLEY. If no one at all will take it, maybe it's best to give it up to the police.

TIM CASEY. There'd be a welcome for it with them surely! (*Laughter.*)

MRS. TULLY. And it is to the police Kitty Keary herself will be brought.

MRS. TARPEY (*rocking to and fro*). I wonder now who will take the expense of the wake for poor Jack Smith?

BARTLEY. The wake for Jack Smith!

TIM CASEY. Why wouldn't he get a wake as well as another? Would you begrudge him that much?

BARTLEY. Red Jack Smith dead! Who was telling you?

SHAWN EARLY. The whole town knows of it by this.

BARTLEY. Do they say what way did he die?

JAMES RYAN. You don't know that yourself, I suppose, Bartley Fallon? You don't know he was followed and that he was laid dead with the stab of a hayfork?

BARTLEY. The stab of a hayfork!

SHAWN EARLY. You don't know, I suppose, that the body was found in the Five Acre Meadow?

BARTLEY. The Five Acre Meadow!

TIM CASEY. It is likely you don't know that the police are after the man that did it?

BARTLEY. The man that did it!

MRS. TULLY. You don't know, maybe, that he was made away with for the sake of Kitty Keary, his wife?

BARTLEY. Kitty Keary, his wife!

(*Sits down bewildered.*)

MRS. TULLY. And what have you to say now, Bartley Fallon?

BARTLEY (*crossing himself*). I to bring that fork here, and to find that news before me! It is much if I can ever stir from this place at all, or reach as far as the road!

TIM CASEY. Look, boys, at the new magistrate, and Jo Muldoon along with him! It's best for us to quit this.

SHAWN EARLY. That is so. It is best not to be mixed in this business at all.

JAMES RYAN. Bad as he is, I wouldn't like to be an informer against any man.

(*All hurry away except Mrs. Tarpey, who remains behind her stall. Enter magistrate and policeman.*)

MAGISTRATE. I knew the district was in a bad state, but I did not expect to be confronted with a murder at the first fair I came to.

POLICEMAN. I am sure you did not, indeed.

MAGISTRATE. It was well I had not gone home. I caught a few words here and there that roused my suspicions.

POLICEMAN. So they would, too.

MAGISTRATE. You heard the same story from everyone you asked?

POLICEMAN. The same story—or if it was not altogether the same, anyway it was no less than the first story.

MAGISTRATE. What is that man doing? He is sitting alone with a hayfork. He has a guilty look. The murder was done with a hayfork!

POLICEMAN (*in a whisper*). That's the very man they say did the act; Bartley Fallon himself!

MAGISTRATE. He must have found escape difficult—he is trying

to brazen it out. A convict in the Andaman Islands tried the same game, but he could not escape my system! Stand aside—Don't go far—have the handcuffs ready. (*He walks up to Bartley, folds his arms, and stands before him.*) Here, my man, do you know anything of John Smith?

BARTLEY. Of John Smith! Who is he, now?

POLICEMAN. Jack Smith, sir—Red Jack Smith!

MAGISTRATE (*coming a step nearer and tapping him on the shoulder*). Where is Jack Smith?

BARTLEY (*with a deep sigh, and shaking his head slowly*). Where is he, indeed?

MAGISTRATE. What have you to tell?

BARTLEY. It is where he was this morning, standing in this spot, singing his share of songs—no, but lighting his pipe—scraping a match on the sole of his shoes——

MAGISTRATE. I ask you, for the third time, where is he?

BARTLEY. I wouldn't like to say that. It is a great mystery, and it is hard to say of any man, did he earn hatred or love.

MAGISTRATE. Tell me all you know.

BARTLEY. All that I know— Well, there are the three estates; there is Limbo, and there is Purgatory, and there is——

MAGISTRATE. Nonsense! This is trifling! Get to the point.

BARTLEY. Maybe you don't hold with the clergy so? That is the teaching of the clergy. Maybe you hold with the old people. It is what they do be saying, that the shadow goes wandering, and the soul is tired, and the body is taking a rest—The shadow! (*Starts up.*) I was nearly sure I saw Jack Smith not ten minutes ago at the corner of the forge, and I lost him again— Was it his ghost I saw, do you think?

MAGISTRATE (*to policeman*). Conscience-struck! He will confess all now!

BARTLEY. His ghost to come before me! It is likely it was on account of the fork! I to have it and he to have no way to defend himself the time he met with his death!

MAGISTRATE (*to policeman*). I must note down his words. (*Takes out notebook.*) (*To Bartley.*) I warn you that your words are being noted.

BARTLEY. If I had ha' run faster in the beginning, this terror would not be on me at the latter end! Maybe he will cast it up against me at the day of judgment— I wouldn't wonder at all at that.

MAGISTRATE (*writing*). At the day of judgment——

BARTLEY. It was soon for his ghost to appear to me—is it coming after me always by day it will be, and stripping the clothes off in the night time?— I wouldn't wonder at all at that, being as I am an unfortunate man!

MAGISTRATE (*sternly*). Tell me this truly. What was the motive of this crime?

BARTLEY. The motive, is it?

MAGISTRATE. Yes; the motive; the cause.

BARTLEY. I'd sooner not say that.

MAGISTRATE. You had better tell me truly. Was it money?

BARTLEY. Not at all! What did poor Jack Smith ever have in his pockets unless it might be his hands that would be in them?

MAGISTRATE. Any dispute about land?

BARTLEY (*indignantly*). Not at all! He never was a grabber or grabbed from any one!

MAGISTRATE. You will find it better for you if you tell me at once.

BARTLEY. I tell you I wouldn't for the whole world wish to say what it was—it is a thing I would not like to be talking about.

MAGISTRATE. There is no use in hiding it. It will be discovered in the end.

BARTLEY. Well, I suppose it will, seeing that mostly everybody knows it before. Whisper here now. I will tell no lie; where would be the use? (*Puts his hand to his mouth, and Magistrate stoops.*) Don't be putting the blame on the parish, for such a thing was never done in the parish before—it was done for the sake of Kitty Keary, Jack Smith's wife.

MAGISTRATE (*to policeman*). Put on the handcuffs. We have been saved some trouble. I knew he would confess if taken in the right way.

(*Policeman puts on handcuffs.*)

BARTLEY. Handcuffs now! Glory be! I always said, if there was ever any misfortune coming to this place it was on myself it would fall. I to be in handcuffs! There's no wonder at all in that.

(*Enter Mrs. Fallon, followed by the rest. She is looking back at them as she speaks.*)

MRS. FALLON. Telling lies the whole of the people of this town are; telling lies, telling lies as fast as a dog will trot! Speaking against my poor respectable man! Saying he made an end of Jack Smith! My decent comrade! There is no better man and no kinder man in the whole of the five parishes! It's little annoyance he ever gave to any one! (*Turns and sees him.*) What in the earthly

world do I see before me? Bartley Fallon in charge of the police! Handcuffs on him! O Bartley, what did you do at all at all?

BARTLEY. O Mary, there has a great misfortune come upon me! It is what I always said, that if there is ever any misfortune——

MRS. FALLON. What did he do at all, or is it bewitched I am?

MAGISTRATE. This man has been arrested on a charge of murder.

MRS. FALLON. Whose charge is that? Don't believe them! They are all liars in this place! Give me back my man!

MAGISTRATE. It is natural you should take his part, but you have no cause of complaint against your neighbours. He has been arrested for the murder of John Smith, on his own confession.

MRS. FALLON. The saints of heaven protect us! And what did he want killing Jack Smith?

MAGISTRATE. It is best you should know all. He did it on account of a love affair with the murdered man's wife.

MRS. FALLON (*sitting down*). With Jack Smith's wife! With Kitty Keary!—Ochone, the traitor!

THE CROWD. A great shame, indeed. He is a traitor indeed.

MRS. TULLY. To America he was bringing her, Mrs. Fallon.

BARTLEY. What are you saying, Mary? I tell you——

MRS. FALLON. Don't say a word! I won't listen to any word you'll say! (*Stops her ears.*) O, isn't he the treacherous villain? Ohone go deo!

BARTLEY. Be quiet till I speak! Listen to what I say!

MRS. FALLON. Sitting beside me on the ass car coming to the town, so quiet and so respectable, and treachery like that in his heart!

BARTLEY. Is it your wits you have lost or is it I myself that have lost my wits?

MRS. FALLON. And it's hard I earned you, slaving—and you grumbling, and sighing, and coughing, and discontented, and the priest wore out anointing you, with all the times you threatened to die!

BARTLEY. Let you be quiet till I tell you!

MRS. FALLON. You to bring such a disgrace into the parish. A thing that was never heard of before!

BARTLEY. Will you shut your mouth and hear me speaking?

MRS. FALLON. And if it was for any sort of a fine handsome woman, but for a little fistful of a woman like Kitty Keary, that's not four feet high hardly, and not three teeth in her head unless she got new ones! May God reward you, Bartley Fallon, for the

black treachery in your heart and the wickedness in your mind, and the red blood of poor Jack Smith that is wet upon your hand!

(*Voice of Jack Smith heard singing.*)

The sea shall be dry,
The earth under mourning and ban!
Then loud shall he cry
For the wife of the red-haired man!

BARTLEY. It's Jack Smith's voice—I never knew a ghost to sing before—. It is after myself and the fork he is coming! (*Goes back. Enter Jack Smith.*) Let one of you give him the fork and I will be clear of him now and for eternity!

MRS. TARPEY. The Lord have mercy on us! Red Jack Smith! The man that was going to be waked!

JAMES RYAN. Is it back from the grave you are come?

SHAWN EARLY. Is it alive you are, or is it dead you are?

TIM CASEY. Is it yourself at all that's in it?

MRS. TULLY. Is it letting on you were to be dead?

MRS. FALLON. Dead or alive, let you stop Kitty Keary, your wife, from bringing my man away with her to America!

JACK SMITH. It is what I think, the wits are gone astray on the whole of you. What would my wife want bringing Bartley Fallon to America?

MRS. FALLON. To leave yourself, and to get quit of you she wants, Jack Smith, and to bring him away from myself. That's what the two of them had settled together.

JACK SMITH. I'll break the head of any man that says that! Who is it says it? (*To Tim Casey.*) Was it you said it? (*To Shawn Early.*) Was it you?

ALL TOGETHER (*backing and shaking their heads*). It wasn't I said it!

JACK SMITH. Tell me the name of any man that said it!

ALL TOGETHER (*pointing to Bartley*). It was *him* that said it!

JACK SMITH. Let me at him till I break his head!

(*Bartley backs in terror. Neighbours hold Jack Smith back.*)

JACK SMITH (*trying to free himself*). Let me at him! Isn't he the pleasant sort of a scarecrow for any woman to be crossing the ocean with! It's back from the docks of New York he'd be turned (*trying to rush at him again*), with a lie in his mouth and treachery in his heart, and another man's wife by his side, and he passing her off as his own! Let me at him can't you.

(*Makes another rush, but is held back.*)

MAGISTRATE (*pointing to Jack Smith*). Policeman, put the handcuffs on this man. I see it all now. A case of false impersonation, a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice. There was a case in the Andaman Islands, a murderer of the Mopsa tribe, a religious enthusiast——

POLICEMAN. So he might be, too.

MAGISTRATE. We must take both these men to the scene of the murder. We must confront them with the body of the real Jack Smith.

JACK SMITH. I'll break the head of any man that will find my dead body!

MAGISTRATE. I'll call more help from the barracks. (*Blows Policeman's whistle.*)

BARTLEY. It is what I am thinking, if myself and Jack Smith are put together in the one cell for the night, the handcuffs will be taken off him, and his hands will be free, and murder will be done that time surely!

MAGISTRATE. Come on! (*They turn to the right.*)

Curtain.

KINCORA

PERSONS

MALACHI. *High King of Ireland.*
MAELMORA. *King of Leinster, brother to Gormleith.*
BRENNAIN. *Brian's servant.*
RURY. *Malachi's servant.*
PHELAN. *Maelmora's servant.*
BRIAN. *King of Munster, afterwards High King.*
MURROUGH. *His son.*
GORMLEITH. *His wife, formerly Malachi's wife.*
SITRIC. *Her son by Olaf of the Danes.*
A BEGGAR GIRL.

ACT I

SCENE. *A room in* BRIAN'S *palace at Kincora.* MALACHI *and* MAELMORA *at a table.*

MALACHI. Brian may be a great man, Maelmora, and he may have earned a great name. But he hadn't a stim of sense, no more than I myself, when it came to the choosing of a wife.

MAELMORA. Let you keep in mind now when you speak of Brian's wife, it is of my own sister you are speaking.

MALACHI. It is hard to keep that in mind and very hard. It is as if something went crossways in the making of the two of you, the way you turned out peaceable, and she that is a woman to be giddy and full of stir. I give you my word you would have as much ease being in the one house with her, as to be lodging in a nest of wild bees.

MAELMORA. You took her on the wrong side always, crossing and criticising her, and tormenting her to attend to the needle and to the business of the house. Brian will make a better hand of his marriage, letting her go her own way, and believing as he does there are not her three equals in the world wide.

MALACHI. I gave her a good house and good means and a good name the day I made her the High King's wife. Was not that enough to satisfy any woman within the ring of Ireland? And when

she turned her hand to meddling with my own business, and with things she had no call to at all, I said good-morrow to her and made a good provision for her; and the Pope of Rome gave her, or did not give her, leave to go suit herself better in a man.

MAELMORA. She is getting a good man, getting Brian.

MALACHI. That it may come happy! I had enough of that tongue of hers that has the grey scrape of the Spring. I did not begrudge her to Brian the time she came to him, herself, her coach, and her bridesmaids. It is well if we get through the business that brought us here without her. Brian is a hard man, and very hard, at making his own bargain, without having her at his back.

MAELMORA. It would be more answerable to us getting time to see our own advisers at home. What chance have we against him, and he in his own place at Kincora?

MALACHI. What chance had we against him since the time he brought his fleet of boats up the Shannon? You know well he threatened myself in my own strong place in Meath. It is little chance you yourself had, the time he went following you into Leinster. It is well for you he joined with your sister, or you would have been swept before this.

MAELMORA. Hard as they are, he said he would not move from these terms. But it is likely he might come around to give in a little here or there.

MALACHI. Every man has a right to do that, and not to push things too far. It would be a queer rope that would not be slackened at one time or another.

MAELMORA. He lays down that I myself must be under him, outside such things as concern my own district, and make no league or bargain on my account with any king in or outside of Ireland. But I have made out a new agreement here. Let him leave me to go my own way until there will be some time of need, and then I will come of my free will, and bring all the choice men of Leinster to his help.

MALACHI. He wrote in my own agreement that he must have entire authority in Munster and in the whole of the South. He goes so far as to say he can call for judgments to be given here in his own place. I now am not inclined to give in to that. So long as I am High King, I must have every law and every decree given out in Tara.

MAELMORA. He is entirely too hard on Sitric. If he is head of the Danes itself, he is my own sister's son, and I must see that he will get fair play. His people should get better treatment, and not

be set labouring in the fields and dragging the same as four-footed beasts.

(BRENNAIN, RURY, *and* PHELAN *come in.* BRENNAIN *pulls forward his master's chair.* BRIAN *comes in and sits down.*)

MALACHI. I myself and the King of Leinster are ready for you now, Brian.

BRIAN. Is Sitric here, or is there any sign of him coming?

MAELMORA. He cannot be far off. There was news he will be here within the hour.

BRIAN. But you yourselves have put your names to the agreements we made out. Give me yours here, Maelmora.

MAELMORA. I did not put my name to it yet. I made some changes. I was thinking you are too hard on me in this.

BRIAN. You did not think that way the time my army was visiting you in Leinster. Your memory is gone from you in its track. You came asking and calling to me to quit your province, saying you would give in to anything I might lay down. No, there is no cause for that flush on your face. It was only some little forgetfulness. We could find a cure for it quick enough, if I should come again upon the plains of Kildare.

MAELMORA. Give it here, I will put my name to what you wrote. (*Signs.*)

BRIAN. And what about Sitric? You will remember you went bail for him?

MAELMORA. If I did I will hold to it. What have we to do? It is you yourself have the power. It is as well to be under you, and to get your protection for ourselves.

BRIAN. You see how the High King is not slow or unwilling putting his name to his own agreement. No, he has not written it. Brennain, go seek a better pen for the High King's use. It is the pen that has failed, and not his own word. Malachi is like myself, he always holds to his word.

MALACHI (*signing*). Well, Brian, you are a hard man. But you are doing what I suppose I myself might be doing, and I being in your place. I sounded the pipes yesterday, you are sounding them to-day. There you have an equal share of Ireland with myself.

BRIAN. That is right now. Yourself and myself between us can sweep the whole country, and turn it all to peace.

MALACHI. You are a terrible wicked man, Brian, to go out fighting with for peace.

BRIAN. It is nothing less than that I have been fighting for, through the most of my lifetime, up to now.

MAELMORA. I cannot make out at all why so hardy and so dreaded a man should have his mind set on doing away with war.

BRIAN. It is because I have had my fill of it. Through all the generations my race was for fighting, my father, and my old father, and all that went before. Lugaidh son of Aengus, Cathal son of Aedh, Corc son of Anluan, Lorcan son of Lochta, Cennedigh son of Lorcan; there was no one of them all was reared to any other trade. What way did I myself pass my early time? Watching and attacking, through long winter nights and long summer days, striving to drive out altogether the enemies of Ireland and of Munster. It is well I have earned the right by this to turn from wicked to kind.

MALACHI. If there is any man at all can turn peaceable and keep his name up, it is yourself should be able to do it, for there is no one can say it was through any slackness you are doing it, or any fear, for that is a thing never came into the one house with you.

BRIAN. In troth it is a scarce thing among us. To go into danger shouting, the feet as if rising off the ground with the stir put in them by the pipes, the heart airy in the same way, there is no common man of our armies but will feel that much, the time the troops of his enemies are coming at him, with their attacks and with their cries.

MALACHI. That is an easy courage enough. It is a harder thing to hold to what is won, and to keep out meddlers, and to force respect for the law. To work that out, and to sweat it out, watching and foreseeing through the day, the heart starting and uneasy in the night time, that is a heavy load for any man to be carrying through the weeks and the months and the years.

BRIAN. There is no one in this country hardy enough to face it out but the two, or maybe the three, of us in this room. And as to myself, it is long ago I might have run from it, but for respect for the Man that laid the charge on me, that is God.

MALACHI. It is often I thought there was a good saint spoiled in you, Brian, and you taking to the straight sword and not to the Bishop's crook.

MURROUGH. It might have been better for yourself, Malachi, if my father had never meddled with a sword.

MALACHI. Hearken to the crowing of the young cock! We are done with all that now, Murrough. The sparrows are nesting to-day that were scolding at one another yesterday.

BRIAN (*getting up and looking out*). It is a pity Sitric is not come to make an entire end of this business.

MAELMORA. I tell you I am answerable for my nephew Sitric. He is giving in altogether.

MALACHI. He had nothing to do but to give in, the time you took away the help of Leinster from him.

MAELMORA. I will go out by the Hill of the Grey Rock to meet him. It is likely he may be coming by Lough Graney. I promised him a good welcome from you, Brian.

BRIAN. You did well promising that. Go you, Murrough, with Maelmora. I myself will go towards the weir. He might chance to come from the south.

MALACHI. I will go along with you, Brian. We can be pricing the colts in the river meadows as we go.

BRIAN (*To Brennain*). Make the table ready, Brennain. When Sitric comes all we have to do is to see his name put to the agreement, and to sit down to dinner.

(*The Kings all go out. The servants come forward.*)

PHELAN. This peace is a great celebration now of Brian's wedding with Queen Gormleith. Malachi the High King owning the whole of the North. Brian King of the whole of the South! Maelmora safe in his own place in Leinster. Meddling with one another no more than the white and the yolk of an egg! Peace as round and as sound as the eggshell itself. Peace forever in Ireland and Leinster and in Kincora!

BRENNAIN. Ah, what signifies talking about eggs and about agreements? The one is as perishable as the other. Believe me there is some mother of mischief does be always at roost overhead in Ireland, to claw and to shatter pacifications or any well disposed thing at all. Peaces and treaties! I would make no treaty with the Gall but to strike their head off!

PHELAN. You are always ready, Brennain, to put ridicule upon anything I will lay down. But I know well, whatever may have happened at any other time, this peace will never be broken. Who is there to frustrate it? It is not the Danes will do that and they being the way they are, not daring to let a squeal out of them, no more than a hunted otter would have gone hiding in a stream.

RURY. Whoever may break that peace it will not be my master Malachi. Too wide he is and too fleshy, and too easy, to be craving more of the cares and the hardships of the world. It is quiet he is asking now, to get some comfort and to train his four-year-olds, and to be sleeping his sound sleep through the night time.

PHELAN. Whoever might break the peace it will not be my own

master Maelmora. Now that the Danes are beat, he has no mind to be beat along with them, and in my opinion he is right.

BRENNAIN. There is no one but must say that Brian has done his best for peace, and he going so far as to bring home a wife, as a notice and as a sign that the country should be tranquillised. It is not out of Kincora that any provocation will be rising up. Sure our teeth are clogged yet with the leavings of the wedding feast.

RURY. There is no chance I suppose, my hero, that the newly married Queen might bring the pot to the boil?

BRENNAIN. Ah, not at all! What call would she have to be meddling in things of the sort? A very pleasant plain lady, kind and nice and lucky; it's as easy talk to her as a child.

PHELAN. I was wondering not to see her to-day and the kings having that big work in hand. That is not the way she used to be in her early time in Leinster.

BRENNAIN. Spearing eels she went, up in the shallows of the river. A good housekeeper she is. She is not one would take her ease and leave the Friday without provision. And there are many not having as much as her, wouldn't walk the road with pride.

RURY. You are a very clever man surely Brennain and a good judge of the Queens of the world and their ways.

BENNAIN. Sure we had a Queen in it previously. Murrough's mother that was a girl of the Hynes out of Connacht. A very nice biddable woman, rocking the cradle with Murrough, and thanking God for her own good luck through the Sundays and holidays of the year. And what Brian got at the first offer, it is not likely it will fail him secondly, and he being high up in the world, and getting sense and experience through up to near three-score years.

PHELAN. Stop your mouth now. Here she is herself coming up the path from the river side. Stepping on the tops of the grass she is, as if she never felt the weight of her crosses; and she a widow-woman before Malachi joined with her itself.

(GORMLEITH *comes to threshold and stands looking in. All the servants fall back and bow obsequiously.*)

BRENNAIN. A welcome before you, Queen, and that you may keep your luck ever and always; and what you have not to-day, that you may have ten times more this day twenty years!

GORMLEITH (*giving him her eel-spear and net*). Who are these that are come to the house? Is that not Phelan of the King of Leinster's people? You are Rury, King Malachi's serving man. But the High King is not here yet?

RURY. The High King is here these three hours, Queen; he took notice of you in the boat, and you going up the river.

GORMLEITH. It is likely he is taking some rest, according to his custom.

RURY. He is not, Queen, but he is after doing the business he had taken in hand.

GORMLEITH (*coming to* MAELMORA'S *chair, putting her hand on the back of it*). What put that hurry on him? He used not to be so eager, but slack.

RURY. Troth he made no delay this time, but sent word to Brian it was best to make a start and to finish the work out of face. Himself and Maelmora sat down after that, and never quitted arguing and sounding out the writings they had put down, till such time as they had their agreement made out with Brian.

GORMLEITH (*to* PHELAN). Did my brother agree to this new bargain?

PHELAN. He did agree where he had to agree to it, and Malachi that had him led to make a stand against Brian, giving in and agreeing on his own side.

GORMLEITH. He had a right to have come to me for advice. Maelmora is as simple and as innocent as a child.

PHELAN. What now has Malachi himself got out of this? Did the High Kingship slip from him yet?

RURY. Malachi is High King now and always, and with the help of God he will be King in Tara to the end.

GORMLEITH. What part have the Danes now in the new agreement? Is Sitric given any share in the country?

PHELAN. Sitric is to be forced to quit the country before the quarter, and his troop of Danes along with him, or to be under the jurisdiction of Malachi and of Brian.

GORMLEITH. I was never told that. Did Sitric agree to be banished, or to take orders from Malachi?

PHELAN. It is what I heard them saying, he will give in to stop here under orders. Maelmora, that went security, said he would write his name to that treaty of pacification, between this and the fall of night.

GORMLEITH. They did not forewarn me he was coming. I thought the business would not be pressed on in this way.

PHELAN. It is for himself they are waiting at this time. They are gone out to hurry him, and they are right doing that. He to make any more delay, it will not be answerable to the dinner.

GORMLEITH. They will be wanting their dinner after such great

work. I am greatly in your way, Brennain. You had best make ready the tables.

BRENNAIN. All is ready and waiting, Queen. We have but to set the chairs, and to bring in the dishes that are dressed.

GORMLEITH. I do not see you stirring yourself, Rury. Is there no help you can give?

RURY. I can be putting the chair ready for the High King. (*Pulls a chair forward.*)

GORMLEITH. Do not put that chair for him, that is King Brian's chair.

RURY. It is the custom to give the best chair to the High King of Ireland.

GORMLEITH. It was the custom. But remember the High King is not above King Brian now. He is but his equal. They are the Kings of the North and the South.

RURY. I would never give in to put Malachi below any other man at all.

PHELAN. Where can I put the King of Leinster's chair?

BRENNAIN. Put it there—by Malachi's left hand. That is it. A little farther down.

GORMLEITH. You are putting it too close, Phelan. King Malachi is so high over all, there must be the length of a sword left between him and any other King of a Province.

PHELAN. My master is good enough to sit close up to any one of the kings of the world.

GORMLEITH (*to Rury*). You should put these forgetful men in mind that your master is master over them.

RURY. So he is, so he is! It is Tara is the capital of Ireland.

BRENNAIN. It is not, but Kincora that is the capital.

PHELAN (*at window*). There is Sitric coming; himself and the King of Leinster are on the brow of the hill.

BRENNAIN. It is best for us to be putting the meat on the table so. (*Goes to the door, and brings back dishes one by one from outside.*) Sitric will sign his name with the less delay the time he will see the fat of the mutton hardening.

GORMLEITH (*who has gone to the window, turning from it*). They are a long way off. I will go meet them. You have time enough. I will leave you an advice. Be sure that the best dish is set before the greatest of the Kings. (*Goes out.*)

BRENNAIN. Here is the best dish, the salted round of the beef. I will set it here before King Brian.

RURY. It is before Malachi it has a right to be put. The best dish should be put before the High King.

BRENNAIN. You heard what Queen Gormleith is after saying, that Brian is every bit as good now as Malachi.

RURY. He is not as good as the King of Tara; and he never will be as good. Put the beef here.

BRENNAIN. Here is a dish is as good, a roasted quarter of a boar.

RURY. We have plenty of pigs in the North. A pig is no great dish for a King. The beef is the more honourable dish.

BRENNAIN. If it is, it is to the more honourable man it is going.

RURY. How do you make that out? The High King is the most honourable man.

BRENNAIN. The High King is it? Where would he be this day but for Brian?

RURY. What is that you are saying?

BRENNAIN. I tell you if it was not for Brian taking the Danes in hand the way he did, it is hares of the wilderness Malachi might be looking for milk from to-morrow morning, instead of from cows!

RURY. Brian is it? Where was Brian the day Malachi took the golden collar from the big Dane? Answer me that!

BRENNAIN. That Malachi may be choked with that same collar before the size of my nail of this beef will go down his gullet until he has asked it first of Brian!

RURY. Asked it of Brian!

BRENNAIN. Asked it and begged it, the same as a queen's lapdog begs at the table.

PHELAN. And what share of the meat is the King of Leinster to get? It is another round of the beef should be put before him!

BRENNAIN. The next time the King of Leinster comes here he will find his fill of beef before him— his own cattle that will be coming from now to then, as tribute from the traitors of Leinster!

PHELAN. Holy Saint Brigit! Listen to what they are saying of your own province!

RURY. Brennain is right that time. Tripe and cow-heels and pigs' crubeens are good enough for that troop, and too good!

PHELAN. Oh, let me out of this! Tripe and crubeens, and all that plenty in the house. I will call upon all the poets of Leinster to put the curse of scarcity on Kincora!

BRENNAIN. My grief I have not the time to sharpen this knife. No matter. It is on your own bones I will sharpen it. (*All seize knives and threaten each other.* MAELMORA, MURROUGH, SITRIC, *and* GORMLEITH *come in.*)

MURROUGH. Have the dogs been let loose from the kennels? Brennain, what is the meaning of these noises?

BRENNAIN. It is those ones that made an attack on me. For quiet I myself am, and for getting ready the table.

PHELAN. Taking the best of the beef he was, and leaving my master to the culls.

BRENNAIN. It was Rury that was asking the best of the chairs for Malachi.

RURY. Let you keep your chair so! Malachi will be master in whatever chair he may sit.

MURROUGH. Malachi master here! That is a new thing for us to know.

PHELAN. Some say he is uppermost, and some say Brian, but the King of Leinster is put in the lowest place of all.

MAELMORA (*to* MURROUGH). Am I thought to be so greatly below Brian, on the head of agreeing to a settlement with him?

MURROUGH. You agreed to pay rent for your province. It is not the one is uppermost that sends in a rent.

MAELMORA. If Brian had spoken in that way I would not have given in to send it. I have a mind to keep it back even now.

MURROUGH. If we send our men looking for it, there will be maybe more profit with us than with yourself.

MAELMORA. I am well able to hold my province against the men of Kincora. Let them fish and shiver like cranes in moonlight, before they will see so much as one staggering bullock coming from Leinster.

SITRIC (*to* MAELMORA). You made out it was for peacemaking you brought me here. It seems to me more like the making of a battle.

GORMLEITH. If that is so, it might happen as lucky. You are in your early days, it might chance you to make a better fight for yourself.

SITRIC. It is a great pity I came to Kincora without bringing a good back of my own men.

MURROUGH. If you had come bringing your fleet of Danes, it is likely you might have got a welcome would have kept you here until the brink of Judgment!

SITRIC. It would have been right to have smoked out this den in the winter nights that are past.

MURROUGH. That smoke would have brought us out to do what was done on you at Sulcoit.

GORMLEITH (*to* MAELMORA). It was your advice that brought

Sitric here. Are you satisfied he is getting good treatment and a friend's welcome?

MAELMORA. Keep your tongue quiet, Murrough. It is hardly Sitric will bear from you, what he might bear from Brian.

SITRIC. I will take no scolding salute from Brian or from any other man, whatever you yourself may be in the habit of taking.

MAELMORA. I have no such habit. I will not let any man say that.

SITRIC. You have taken his orders, you are dragging me into his service the same as yourself.

MAELMORA. If I joined in his league it might happen to me to break away from it yet. It might be less troublesome after, even if it should bring me to my death.

MURROUGH. There is many a man met with a woeful death through setting himself up against King Brian.

BRENNAIN. That is good talk, Murrough! It is Brian has the sway in every place! It is Murrough, my darling, and Brian, are the two hawks of battle of the Gael!

PHELAN. It is myself and Maelmora will turn you to jackdaws! It is ourselves will change your note for you!

RURY. Malachi and the Hill of Tara!

BRENNAIN. Kincora and the River Shannon!

PHELAN. No rent to Brian! We'll hold the cattle!

RURY. Hi for Tara!

BRENNAIN. Out with the Meath graziers!

PHELAN. Down with Kincora!

BRENNAIN. No, but down with Leinster! (MURROUGH, SITRIC, and MAELMORA *are striking at one another with their swords.*)

RURY. The Kings! (MURROUGH, MAELMORA, *and* SITRIC *draw back as* BRIAN *and* MALACHI *come in. The servants fall back.*)

BRIAN (*sternly*). Murrough, what ails you? Are these mannerly ways?

MURROUGH (*suddenly taking hand from sword*). It is you they were faulting, and Kincora. They gregged me with their threats and their jibes. They said they were as great as you. They said—I forget now what they said.

BRIAN. Shut your ears, Murrough, to stiff words said under your own roof. It is best not to hear what you have no leave to answer. (*To* SITRIC *and* MALACHI.) I ask your pardon— I am sorry such a thing has happened.

(*He goes aside with them.* MALACHI *and* GORMLEITH *meet.*)

MALACHI (*to* GORMLEITH). I got no chance before this to salute the Queen of Munster.

GORMLEITH. She is very thankful to King Malachi for the God-speed that was said to her in Tara.

MALACHI. It would seem that you have found in Kincora the stir it failed you to find in my own house.

GORMLEITH. It is likely I would have found stir if I had stopped with you for another while, and yourself and myself facing one another on the hearthside, through the dark evenings of the year.

MALACHI. It would be no wonder, in my opinion, if the Queen herself had put the kindling to his crackling wisp?

GORMLEITH. I would not put a lie on the High King, whatever opinion he might be giving out.

MALACHI. Mind now, Queen, what I am going to say. I am not joking or funning. You are come into a good man's house. Give heed to your flighty headstrong ways, or it may happen you some day to put kindling to no less a thing than the roof that gave shelter to you.

BRIAN (*coming over to them*). I am sorry, Queen, you have seen such disorder in this place, and you being in it so short a while. You will bring order into it now. I had to straighten out my own home, or it would fail me to shape the whole country to the one pattern. A house without a good woman over it is no better than a busy hillside, where men are shouting, and hounds are snapping at their prey, and mannerly ways are out of mind.

GORMLEITH. Indeed I have no complaint to make of all that I have found before me.

BRIAN. It is seldom a woman's voice was heard here through the years past, unless it might be in the keening, when the dead of our race are brought home.

GORMLEITH. It is no sleepy place I am come to, or a place where slackness would be in fashion. I am satisfied and well satisfied with the roof that has given me shelter.

MALACHI. Let us not be wasting time now, and the day going. Sitric is here with us. Let him put his name to the agreement, and the dinner will turn the whole company to better humour. Good meat and good drink are maybe the best peacemakers.

BRIAN. There is the agreement, Sitric. Maelmora, your uncle, put down the terms you had settled between you. You have but to put your name. The securities will be written with it to-morrow (SITRIC is silent.) Will you cast an eye on it? Or are you satisfied with whatever Maelmora has written?

MALACHI. We put down in the writing that you and your army

would agree to quit Ireland or to live in quiet, without arms, in the service of myself and of Brian.

SITRIC. I will not write my name to it.

BRIAN. You came here promising to do it.

MALACHI. It was of your own free will you sent in your submission. Why would you draw back from it now?

SITRIC. Words have been said to me that I am not used to put up with.

BRIAN. This is Murrough's foolishness. I have asked your pardon for it, and he will ask your pardon.

SITRIC. I will not agree to obey or give in to any one of you at all.

MALACHI. What is that you are saying?

SITRIC. I will not give in to yourself or to Brian. I will not give in to be a stranger and an exile. I will not bid my people to give up their arms. I will bid them to go on fighting to the last.

BRIAN. You know well you could not stand against us alone, through the length of a winter day.

MAELMORA. He will not be alone. I give up my share in this league. I would sooner be with the Danes, than under Brian of the Tributes.

MALACHI. How quick you youngsters are at taking offence! A couple of foolish words said, and all our trouble gone to loss. When you are as long on the road as we are you will take things easy. In my opinion Brian was too soft with the two of you up to this. It would have been better to have banished you, and gained some comfort for the both of us. (*To* BRIAN.) Maybe we can make them some offer. Let them have their own way with Leinster so long as they will not meddle with ourselves. A new war would be a weighty business. You were saying awhile ago the country was in great need of peace.

BRIAN. Entire peace is what is badly wanting, but a half peace is no better worth the winning than the half of the living child was brought to the Judgment of Solomon.

MALACHI. In my opinion you will not see entire peace or the end of quarrels in Ireland, till such time as the grass stops growing or talk comes to the thrush.

BRIAN. I tell you I will make no settlement that will leave any one of the five Provinces a breeding ground for the enemies and the ill-wishers of Ireland. When Charlemagne of the French took his work in hand he left no such a nest of mischief; or Harold in Norway, or Alfred of the burned cakes, that is in the histories. This tossed tormented country has to be put in order, and to be kept in

order, and travel whatever road God laid out for it, without arguing and backbiting and the quarrelling of cranky bigoted men. Sitric must put his name to this or make himself ready for a battle and a check.

SITRIC (*takes parchment, looks at it a moment, then cuts it through with his sword and throws it down violently*). There is an end of your agreement!

BRIAN (*taking out sword*). This edge is sharp yet. God knows I am telling no lie saying I would sooner see it rusted than raddled.

MALACHI. War is a troublesome business. There is maybe no one of us will be the better of it in the end.

BRIAN (*unbuckling sheath*). But as to this cover it may rust and rot, for I will make no use of it from this out so long as there is so much as a whisper of rebellion or of treachery in any province or barony or parish, east or west, north or south! (*Throws it down.*)

SITRIC. Let my own stay with it till I come to bring it away! (*Throws down sheath.*)

MAELMORA. And there is mine along with it! (*He and* SITRIC *turn to go.*)

GORMLEITH (*to* MALACHI). That is the way we strike the board till we see the cards coming to us! The trump will be in our hands yet! Are you loth, Malachi, to trust your luck to the cards? Do not be daunted, Brian is on your side this time! But believe me, the world will wonder yet, at the luck you let go from you to Brian!

Curtain.

ACT II

[AFTER GLENMAMA]

SCENE: *Same room at Kincora. Heap of spoils on floor.* BRENNAIN *has just come in holding* PHELAN, *who is bound. Music outside and shouting.* RURY *is looking at spoils on floor.*

BRENNAIN. Those are terrible great shouts the people are letting out of them to welcome King Brian, that has beat the whole fleet of traitors at Glenmama, and has them ground as fine as meal!

RURY. And to welcome King Malachi that beat them along with him, and that will be here within the hour.

BRENNAIN. And maybe to welcome myself! What now do you say to me taking this prisoner in the battle! Drove him before me I did the whole of the way from Glenmama. Believe me it's the Leinster men can run well!

RURY. Is it my brave Phelan is in it, that went out such a hero to the war?

BRENNAIN (*pushing* PHELAN *before him*). Come on here! Is it that you said we were jackdaws? Give me a wisp of lighted straw, till I'll make him shout for King Brian!

RURY. That's the chat! That's the chat! Put terror on him now, till he'll let out a shout for the High King!

BRENNAIN. That's the way we drag traitors back, that went boasting and barging out of Kincora.

PHELAN. If I did boast, you need not be putting the blame on myself. The dog to get a bone, the dog's tail must wag. I do but wag as my master pleases.

BRENNAIN (*looking at heap of spoils*). It is ourselves are nourished with the bone presently! Satin stuffs, gold rings, jewels would buy out the entire world! Coming in since morning they are! You would not meet a car or a Christian on the road but is charged with them! Robbed by the Danes they were from every strong place in Ireland and from the hidden houses of the Sidhe!

RURY. I am best pleased my own mind to be dwelling on the prisoners. Sitric to be taken with his army of Danes. The King of Leinster to be brought here (*turns to* PHELAN) spancelled in a gad, the same as his own serving man.

BRENNAIN. It was Murrough took him, my darling boy! Concealed he was in a yew tree. It was Murrough dragged him out of it, the same as a wren's nest.

PHELAN. It is very unmannerly you are, to be casting up that yew tree against the King of Leinster. Sure he not to go hide in it, he might not be at this time in the living world.

RURY. What now will Queen Gormleith have to say, her son and her brother the same as judged and executed, and the whole of their means made our prey.

PHELAN. That is a thing will not happen. I tell you, that is a lady is well able to bring a man from the foot of the gallows. She is not one would leave it to God to rule the world, the time she herself has a hand to put to the work.

BRENNAIN. Brian that was turning to be kind will not show kind-

ness this time. He took it very bad, Maelmora and Sitric to stand up to him the way they did, and he after binding them by an act of peace. It is not consanguinity will save Queen Gormleith's brother, or get off her lad of a son.

PHELAN. She will gain safety for him, and for the two of them, through some enticement or some strategy of her own. It is easy seen, Brennain, that you were never joined with a wife.

BRENNAIN. If I was itself, there is no woman or no score of women, cranky or civil, coaxer or cross, would ever put me from my opinion, I once to have laid it down.

PHELAN. It is likely Brian will give in to the asking of the woman he will have beside him through the length of the four quarters of the year. Whinging and whining, she will come to him; making threats she will go perish on their grave. I tell you there are women in it, would coax the entire world.

RURY. And what way would it profit her, striving to influence Brian? Sure there is no one has power to judge and to chastise these prisoners at all, but only the High King, that is Malachi.

BRENNAIN. It is a bad chastisement he will be apt to be giving them. Brian would be severe on no person if there was anything at all to be said for him. But as to a wind from the North, it will never be civil or kind.

RURY. It will no way serve her to come purring around Malachi. She knows that well herself. It is more likely a taste she will give him of the sharpness of her claws.

PHELAN. The Lord be with Malachi she to set herself against him, in earnest! She would have him out of the High Kingship between this and the roosting of the hens.

RURY. It is not likely Brian would be asking to earn the name of a grabber, snapping up the High Kingship for himself.

BRENNAIN. If he did grab it, he would turn it to better profit than what Malachi is doing. What signifies a High King that is satisfied with such things as may come into his hand, without any sort of big thoughts and of lofty plans? Brian now would stand at his own hall door and cast an eye over the whole of the domains of the world and Tir-nan-oge along with them. To get this country pacified, the way he could work out all that he had in his mind, that is what set him cracked and craving after peace. I never knew him to be disconcerted but the day that last treaty was tore. "Give me twenty year, or ten year itself, of quiet," says he to the Queen, "and the world will bow down to the name of Ireland." "Give us the High Kingship," says I

to myself with myself, "and we will find something more to do with it, than to go racing garrans in Meath."

RURY. No fear of you getting it. It was sealed and witnessed in the bond, Malachi to preserve it for his lifetime.

BRENNAIN. Brian to get it, he would make Ireland the leader of the universe! The men of arts from every part coming to learn their own trade; coming by shoals they would be, like mackerel on the spring tide! Every smith of a forge shaping golden bracelets! Every scholar in a school speaking the seven languages! Every village of cabins a city with towers and with walls! Towers am I saying, no but rounded steeples would penetrate the thunder in the clouds.

RURY. Well you are great old warriors for giving out boasting talk in Kincora.

BRENNAIN. It is Brian will put his orders on the ocean, on the narrow seas and the wide! His ships will go searching out every harbour! Every strange sail will moult and wither, getting a sight of his lime-white sail. He will put his rent on the kings of the world, they will pay him a heavy rent!

RURY. Pride grew in you, as rank as cabbage of the young moon, since you chancing on a straggler of your own!

BRENNAIN. Rents they will send, and tributes they will send! Sea-horses having blue eyes, barrels broke and bursting with the weight of rendered gold! Elephants' teeth, hairy men, and peacocks, the same as to Solomon of the Jews.

PHELAN. It was a woman's wit baffled King Solomon at the end, the time he thought to drive her from his house. What is Queen Gormleith apt to be at all that time? Do you think will she be satisfied to be sitting quiet, and her thoughts near as flighty as your own?

BRENNAIN. She will be satisfied and tethered and clogged, with the sight of the grandeur all around! There is no woman at all but would be subjugated, and all the nations to be blowing the horn before her man.

RURY (*looks out of window. A shout outside*). There is King Brian himself at the door, and the people going cracked after him. Malachi should be on the road yet. I see no sign of him coming. It is best for me to go ask news of him, and be getting a shout for him by the time he will come in view. (*Goes out.*)

(BRENNAIN *pushes* PHELAN *off through door.* BRIAN *comes in, goes slowly to his chair.*)

BRENNAIN. The Branch to King Brian! All the people are gone

wild for you! The poets are starting a poem about the great victory of Glenmama! A song with as many verses as my fingers and toes, and a great deed in every verse.

BRIAN. That it may be a good one, for if I get my own way I will give them no cause to make songs from this out, on the head of battles or of slaughter.

BRENNAIN. Good is it? The words are coming fast as the running of the Danes before us! Making for the sea they were the same as gulls; they are putting the screaming of gulls in the poem.

BRIAN. Let them twang it a long way off! I have had enough of noises. (*Sits down and takes off sword.*)

BRENNAIN. What will we do with the treasures we brought away? The whole place is choked up with them.

BRIAN. Make three shares of them. A share for the High King, and a share for the learned men, and a share for Kincora.

BRENNAIN. I will, I will keep the best share for ourselves.

BRIAN. The best must go to the High King.

BRENNAIN. It is you yourself have a right to be High King, Brian, after this great victory. I tell you all Ireland is thirsting for it.

BRIAN. I know, I know, they were sounding it out on the roads. They are calling out against two kings being in the one saddle. But they may deafen themselves with shouting before they will make me break my peace with Malachi.

BRENNAIN. They'd sooner you. It is not Malachi will master the five provinces, tearing and spitting at one another the way they are. Five wild cats struggling in a bag, and four times five claws on every one of them.

BEGGAR (*at door*). In the name of Brigit is beside me with her cloak,
In the name of Michael is before me with his power,
MacDuagh, MacDara, and Columcille of my love,
I put this house under the power of the Man having the candle!

BRIAN. Who is that?

BRENNAIN. Some travelling woman carrying the bag—the heavy sweat running down beside her—she should have been running on her road. (*Beggar comes in.*) What is it brings you here? What call have you coming here, you that are used to ditches and to haggards, to be standing on the royal threshold of the King?

BRIAN. It is sometimes those that go sleeping on the straw of a haggard have their own view of angels of heaven. You would seem

not to have got any long sleep in any place. Where was it you spent the night-time?

BEGGAR. Last night at the feet of the poor,
To-morrow at the feet of the Son of God.
I ran fast, and very fast, to come as far as yourself, Brian.

BRIAN. What is it makes you so uneasy?

BEGGAR. Looking I am for the hidden key. Go search it out yourself, King Brian, in this day of your great victory.
For all you have won of silver and of store,
And the people raising you in their arms,
Let you be remembering bye and bye,
Let you do your ploughing for the harvest in heaven!

BRIAN. God knows I have ears for that call if the hurry of the times did not hold me.

BEGGAR. Come searching for the key of heaven. It is in some hidden vessel.
Come out before your candle will be spent,
At the asking of the Man beyond, the King of Sunday.
Make yourself ready for the day of the Mountain,
Before your lease will be out and your summons written!

BRIAN. It is the wanderers of the world should be happy, being freed as they are to run that road. I myself am a labouring man under orders, having the weight of this (*holding up sword*) in my hands through the days and the hours and the months and the years.

BEGGAR. Any labouring man at all would be free to throw down the scythe at the end of the day, and the bell ringing.

BRIAN. In my contract, the Saturday night is all one with the Monday morning. It is the King of the Angels gave this to me. It is with it I am striving to cut the name of Ireland in clean letters among the nations. It is with this I have to do my work, until such time as the poor class, the people that are very sorry, will get some ease and some comfort and some wealth.

BEGGAR. You are out of it! You are out of it! Bruise the ground and that will be done for you. Put that weighty thing out of your hand. Take in place of it nine drops of the water of wisdom—bring down Adam's paradise till we have it about us on every side; teach all the people to be telling the hours, till they have their eyes clear to see the angels walking Ireland in plenty!

BRIAN. I will surely turn to no other work, the time I will have freed the whole of the country from all keening and mischief and treachery. It is to bring that time I have stooped my back till now from the rising of the sun.

BEGGAR. That that time may come soon and come happy!

BRIAN. Look now at that ring. It is worth great riches. Take it and give me your prayers. Bring me word that a lone woman can walk Ireland carrying a ring like that, and no one troubling her, and I will take it as a sign I am given leave to sit down at the table of the angels.

BEGGAR. I will do that, I will do that for you. I will run and run till I will loosen your mind from its cares. My grief that I am not a salmon to go leaping through the streams of Ireland to bring news there is no blemish on its peace, or a crane to go flying in the same way. My grief that I have but these two bare feet. (*Takes ring and turns to go.*)

Brigit of victories, put your cloak around me,
Come, Michael Oge, and take me by the hand,
O bush of shelter, O well reared archangel,
Come travel beside me over ridges, over bogs!

GORMLEITH (*coming in*). Brennain, take away this poor woman from the place she has no right to be, let her sit with the other beggars at the gate or give her a charity and let her go. Leave me here with the King. (BRENNAIN *and beggar go out.*)

BRIAN. Ah, my Queen, I had sent for you. Have you no welcome before me?

GORMLEITH. A welcome and a great welcome to you, Brian.

BRIAN. It is in your words—but your face gives no good welcome. You are not looking flowery, but pale.

GORMLEITH. There has heavy news reached to me, that has put me to and fro.

BRIAN. No wonder in that, my poor Gormleith. I your own comrade on the one side, and your own blood and kindred on the other side, there must trouble fall upon you, whatever side is uppermost.

GORMLEITH. The trouble is gone from me. You are back here with me, and you are not looking vexed but kind.

BRIAN. My dear, you are nearer to me than my heart.

GORMLEITH. I knew there would be no fear, you being in the one house with me again.

BRIAN. There will be nothing to call us from one another from this out. We have a great work to do for this country together. Our best time is coming, and our shining time.

GORMLEITH. And you will not refuse me my first request?

BRIAN. You had no request to make up to this, because I gave all before your asking. Tell me what is it you are wanting from me now?

GORMLEITH. You will put no hard punishment on Maelmora and on Sitric? You will not banish them out of Ireland? You will forgive them? You will let them go free?

BRIAN. As for myself, the time of hardness is behind me. But you are forgetting it is not by me they must be judged.

GORMLEITH. Ah, but whisper now, you will do it this time, you will make some way to bring it about? You would not see me fretting, fretting, after my son that is my darling—and my brother?

BRIAN. It is the High King has to be judge.

GORMLEITH. Malachi? Then they are the same as lost! What chance will they have facing him? He will be bitter against them on my account.

BRIAN. You are not right saying that. It is given in to Malachi that he is a fair man and an honest man.

GORMLEITH. It is not my son will get fair play from him. Judge him yourself, Brian, and give him the punishment you think right, and whatever it is I will make no complaint.

BRIAN. I would be glad and very glad to comfort you, but that is a thing cannot be done.

GORMLEITH. You are a great man and a great king. You can do everything. Give in to this now, and it is not to-day or to-morrow I will serve you, but every day.

BRIAN. What I can give I have given, without any interest or any bargain.

GORMLEITH. Why would you give in to Malachi? Through this while past he is lessening, you are strengthening, there is no one but will say you are the strongest.

BRIAN. The law is stronger again. It is the law that the High King must judge kings and makings of kings.

GORMLEITH. That is a crooked law. Break away from it, Brian.

BRIAN. Give heed to me now, I agreed to the laws and swore to them, and I will not be the one to turn and to renage. You would have no good opinion of me yourself, Gormleith, I doing that.

GORMLEITH. Then it is certain they will be sent to their death.

BRIAN. They took the chance of that, and they going into the war. There are many have lost life and all through their work.

GORMLEITH. He will put me down, putting them down. That will not satisfy him. He will accuse me along with them, he will say I stirred them up. It is best for me to take my place beside them. Let the three of us be judged together.

BRIAN. That will not happen. The High King himself would not dare to meddle with my wife.

GORMLEITH. It will be best. It is not to banishment they will be sent. I will go meet my own death with them, with Sitric and with Maelmora. I will not go on living after them. My heart will break in me, and I will die! It is soon we all will be in the ground together.

BRIAN. I thought the woman I married had more courage in her.

GORMLEITH. Ah, it is hard to keep courage when trouble comes scalding the heart.

BRIAN. If they had been killed in any of their battles, you would have keened them, and put a high stone over them, and raised your head again and not given in to grief.

GORMLEITH. That would have been a good death. But what are they going to now but a poor shameful lonely death? Oh, Maelmora! Oh, Sitric! Oh, dear black head! Oh, my child that I have never wronged! But God be with all the mothers of the world!

BRIAN. You were brought up in a king's house, you knew the rules of every quarrel and of every game. And you were married into kings' houses, and you should know, whatever hand the cards come into, the game must be played out fair. And those laws and these rules will not be broken, even if they should break a queen's heart, or it might be a king's in its track.

MURROUGH (*coming in*). Here now is the High King.

BRIAN. Bring in the prisoners before him. (MURROUGH *goes out.* GORMLEITH *goes back into corner where she is not seen.*)

MALACHI (*comes in and sits down at table*). I was delayed on the way. Your Munster roads are good inn-keepers, they would not let the wheels of my chariot go from them.

(MURROUGH *comes in with* SITRIC *and* MAELMORA *bound, followed by* BRENNAIN, RURY, *and* PHELAN.)

BRIAN. The prisoners are here before you.

MALACHI. There is no cause for delay. Their judgment will be a quick one.

BRIAN. Let it be a merciful one as well as just.

MALACHI. It is sometimes what is the hardest to one or to two, is the punishment kindest at the last to the scores and the hundreds.

BRIAN. Have they any excuse to make for themselves?

MURROUGH. They have made none to me.

MALACHI. There is no excuse for them to make.

BRIAN. What have you to say in your own defence?

MURROUGH. You hear, Maelmora and Sitric, what my father is asking.

MAELMORA. I will say no word. I went out fighting, and the fight turned against me.

SITRIC. Where is the use of talking? Nothing I could say would turn your mind from whatever you may have planned.

BRIAN. What do you say, High King?

MALACHI. There is nothing to be said, but the story we all know before. These men were bound to peace, they had promised peace. I had need of quiet, Brian was calling for quiet, the whole country was in need of it. The whole of Ireland was a raddled fleece, a flock torn by wild dogs. We that were as if herding, were tired out with keeping them off. I agreed to give up a great deal to Brian for the sake of a settlement, and I held to my word, and they broke their word. There is no one can put trust in them from this out. That is the whole story. Is there a lie in what I have said, Brian?

BRIAN. There is no lie in it. All you have said is true.

MALACHI. You know well what way the law would condemn them; and these have no more right to law than a dog or a fox from the woods.

BRIAN. That would mean death.

MALACHI. The wild dog that is hanged will worry no sheep. The fox that is dead will devour no lambs.

MURROUGH. They can make no complaint. They did not spare their own prisoners, or their rebels.

GORMLEITH (*coming forward*). Malachi!

MALACHI (*sternly and rising*). This is not a right place for you, or a fitting place.

GORMLEITH. Malachi, the time you and I myself parted one from another, there was many a thing to forgive between us. Whatever you may have working in your mind against myself, I beg and pray you not to let it work against these.

MALACHI. God knows, that is above us, there is nothing in my heart against them, but the thing all this country that they have wronged must have against them, the attack made by them upon the peace of Ireland, and the great slaughter done by their means at Glenmama.

GORMLEITH. I will ask no other thing of you for ever, Malachi, but to stretch out now and to forgive them.

MALACHI. I would wish any other in the whole world to have made that request, till I would show it is no grudge or no malice is making me refuse it, but the great necessity of this country.

GORMLEITH. Put it from your mind there is any woman before

you, but only King Brian's wife. It is a good man's wife is making this asking.

MALACHI. It is his own good name I am serving. I am not willing for the people to say, and the generations that are rising, that King Brian came meddling with the laws that are for their protection and their safety. It is not Brian would wish it to be said among the people, it was a woman came around us and misled us.

GORMLEITH. Ah, if it is to the people you are calling to bear witness, I can tell you what is it the people are saying. They say it is you yourself have the sway, and that it is under your sway all they own has been turned to wrack and to ruin. Yes, Brian, I know what I am saying (BRIAN *has tried to interrupt her*). In his early days there was no one to beat him, he was wary, he was hardy, he was great. But look now the way things are in his province, and in every place that is under him! No one travelling your highways, but it is in the byroads men must creep, your wheat fields all headland, the children treading on the hungry grass. They are cursing you for that. Oh, I have heard them. They say they would as soon be under the wicked Danes as under Malachi that is turned careless and turned weak. That is why you will not let off these enemies that are beaten! You are afraid to show kindness, you are in dread of those poor hungry people, you are in dread they would say, "Take his place away from him, we were right; Malachi has turned to be weak."

MALACHI. You have said one true word, Gormleith, saying that I am in dread. I am that. I am afraid to show kindness. And I do not say but that these two left alone would be apt to give in, and to carry out their bargain straight and fair. But they would not do it, and they would not be let do it. It was I myself brought you back from the Danes, thinking to turn you to be loyal as a queen should. And it failed me to do it, and it will fail Brian, and it has failed him!

BRIAN. Take heed what you are saying! You are coming near to danger saying that.

MALACHI. Danger, yes, there is danger wherever this woman comes, and I have one question to put to her. The cause of this last war to be searched out, who is it would be found at the root of it?

GORMLEITH. I told you, Brian, he would draw down this on me, I forewarned you. It is best for me to take my place between my two. I will take my chance along with them. (*She goes between* MAELMORA *and* SITRIC.) If the fault was mine, let me pay the penalty. An unkind word to be thrown at a woman, it is little till it brings down her name altogether. The tree to begin to fade, what

is there would bring it around? Malachi, I am willing to take you as my judge. You have accused me, give out the decree against me. Judge me here now on this floor.

MALACHI. I have no mind to judge any one at all, in this place. I made a great mistake giving in to come into it at all.

BRIAN. It was laid down between us, this work was to be done in Kincora.

MALACHI. I had no business coming here to be checked and dogged on every side. Tara is the place for judgments, and not the house of a king of a province.

BRIAN. This is a house that had the name of an honest house, and of a house for fair play to the high-up and to the poor.

MALACHI. There is too much meddling in it, meddling that will lead to confusion and the breaking of laws. I lay it on you, Brian, to keep order in the first place in your own home. As to these kinsmen of yours, I will bring them as I had a right to have done at the first, to Tara and before the Council of Tara.

GORMLEITH. You have very big pride in Tara, Malachi. But all Ireland knows, and you know, this man could put you out of it to-day if he would but lift his hand up and give the sign. It is only his kindness and his goodwill have left you up to this the name of being High King.

MALACHI. Is that your own opinion, Brian, or is it but the giddy talk of a woman that is vexed? If you think yourself equal to me, say it out, and the two of us will settle the case together.

BRIAN. I do say it. I say the time is come when there can be but one master in Ireland.

MALACHI. I agree to that. But whoever has Tara is master.

BRIAN. Wherever the greatest strength is, the Hill of Tara is. My strength has dragged Tara westward.

MALACHI. I will not give in to that. It is only in Tara I will give from this out any decree or any judgment.

BRIAN. Then I will give out my own judgment. I draw down on Maelmora, King of Leinster, that he has broken from the league made with me and the High King of Ireland, and turned his hand against us. I draw down on Sitric, the Dane, the great oppression he and his people have done upon Ireland.

MURROUGH. I will tell our men outside they have your orders to come in and to bring them to their death.

BRIAN. They have earned death and well earned it. They have nothing to urge against it. But stop! Let no one meddle with them! I will leave them their liberty and their life.

MALACHI. If Brian had not said that, I would say a fool had said it.

BRIAN. I am strong enough to show kindness, I have done with killing, I will have no more of it.

MALACHI. If you let them go, there will be quarrels again and killing.

BRIAN. I think not. They have learned their lesson, they know their master.

MURROUGH. If you let them go, it is hardly our own army will let them.

BRIAN. Is it with the threat of an army you are thinking to force me, boy?

MURROUGH. It is as if you yourself are forcing a peace.

BRIAN. That is what I am doing and what I have the right to do. I will make an end of quarrels. I will make an end of this custom of death answering to death through the generations, like the clerks answering to one another at the Mass. I will force a peace. Murrough, cut these cords. (MURROUGH *does so slowly.*)

MALACHI. It is against my will you are doing it.

BRIAN. Are they freed? Give back their arms to these kings.

MALACHI. They are no kings now, but traitors that have been worsted.

BRIAN. I say they are kings. Maelmora, I give you back your own kingdom of Leinster. Sitric, I give you your old town of Dublin to keep and to mind, for Ireland and for me.

MALACHI (*rising*). This is war then and the breaking of peace.

BRIAN. It is not, but the beginning of peace.

MALACHI. I will raise Connacht against you. I will call to my kinsmen in the north.

GORMLEITH. You know well you will get no help from the north, or from any other place, against King Brian.

MALACHI. That will be known soon and very soon.

BRIAN. If you think you can keep the High Kingship by force, I will give you the length of a month or of a quarter to bring your men together.

MALACHI. A month will be enough. I will lose no minute. The north and the west will be against you. (*He goes out followed by* RURY.)

BRIAN. War upon us again. Well, it was laid down—and I am ready.

GORMLEITH. He will get no help, Brian. No one at all will come out against you. His own messenger has said that in a song. He

went east and west, north and south, and he found the one story in every place. There was not a man in all Ireland that would raise a hand against King Brian.

BRIAN. His own messenger has said that? Then the sap of power has turned from him to me. The Man beyond is giving Ireland into my charge! His right hand is stretched over the north, his left to the south towards the sun, his face is towards the west. His angels have set their ladder upon Usnach, Victor, angel of Patrick, Axal, angel of Columcille, Michael, leader of armies! It is a great thing they are doing for me giving me the help of their hands. (*Rises.*) Ireland, Ireland, I see you free and high and wealthy; wheat in every tilled field, beautiful vessels in the houses of kings, beautiful children well nourished in every house. No meddling of strangers within our merings, no outcry of Gael against Gael! It is not so, Malachi will get help. Why am I taking the words of a woman, of a song? I have not done with war. (MALACHI *comes back.*)

MURROUGH. He has come back to ask more time.

BRIAN. If he is in need of more time, I will give him up to a year.

MALACHI. I have a hard thing to say. I will not bring destruction on my people. I take back my big words. The luck has turned against me. The people have turned from me. I have no help to get. Queen Gormleith was speaking truth.

BRIAN. You are saying you will not bring out your men against us?

MALACHI. I will keep them ready, but it will be against the Gall.

BRIAN. You will give up all you are claiming. You will give up that crown?

MALACHI. I will not, but I must. (*Takes it off.*)

BRIAN. God has given me the power, it is to God I have to answer, it is for the peace of Ireland I have taken it.

MALACHI (*giving it*). Take it and the weight of it. Yet it was in the prophecy that I would be king after you in Tara.

BRIAN. I lift it in my hand that is stronger than your hand. I will send out the name of this kingdom through the entire world. I will bring all Ireland under the one strong rule.

GORMLEITH. Long life and a good life to Brian, High King of Ireland!

ALL (*but* MALACHI). Long life to the High King.

MALACHI. It is not you, yourself, Brian, have done this. It may seem to you this queen has brought you luck doing it. She has turned my luck backwards. Who is the next she will turn her hand against?

GORMLEITH (*going on her knees*). Do not listen to him, Brian. I would walk the world for you, and you having showed kindness to my darlings! You are my master, he never mastered me! In the time to come whoever may fail you, I myself will never fail or disappoint you!

BRIAN (*lifting her and turning to* BRENNAIN). Brennain, you need not share these riches. They are little enough altogether to offer to the Queen of Tara. (*They all turn to look at the spoils.*)

RURY (*at door*). The coach is ready master. The horses are fed and rested. (*He goes out.*)

MALACHI (*at threshold*). I will go. I have been long enough in this little place. A little place, a narrow place for so much buying and selling. Great gains, great losses. The crown of Ireland for Brian, the High Kingship for Brian, the treasures of Glenmama for Gormleith. Who has the worst of it? Brian has that Crow of Battle!

(*Goes out.*)

Curtain.

ACT III

[*Before Clontarf*]

SCENE. *Same room at Kincora.* GORMLEITH *sitting in a chair gloomily, her head in her hands.* SITRIC *asleep at back.* MAELMORA *comes in.*

MAELMORA. Are you so much up in the world at this time, Gormleith, that you will not give me a welcome?

GORMLEITH (*getting up to greet him*). I did not know you were come. They never told me. Speak easy. Do not waken Sitric, he is only here a short while. He was travelling through the night time from Dublin.

MAELMORA. They told me you were here. They said you did not like to be troubled with messengers.

GORMLEITH. I do not like the messages they bring me, that is all. "Will the Queen come to hear the reading of holy writings?" "Will

the Queen come to make ready for saints and bishops?" "Will the Queen come and kneel to wash the muddy feet of the poor?"

MAELMORA. Brian is surely getting a great name of piety to put along with his name of riches and of power; having, as he has, his head in the skies, and his hand in every good work.

GORMLEITH. Where is the use of gaining power if you go turn from it after to shadows? Heaven may be there as they say, but it is on earth we are living yet. We cannot stop the work of the day to go blinking after dreams of the night. And that is the thing Brian is doing at this time.

MAELMORA. If he does, it is that age is coming upon him as it must come upon us all. What ails you not to let him travel his own way?

GORMLEITH. There is no other way to rouse him. It is laid on me to keep him to the strength and the power of a king. It is I myself made him call the whole army together on this day, to do its exercises that you were bidden to come and see.

MAELMORA. I took notice a long way off of the tents and the flags and great troops of men. But what occasion is there for gathering them at this time more than any other time?

GORMLEITH. When Brian will see his men that helped him in his fighting time, it may stir his mind with the thought of those days, and turn it to do some great hardy thing.

MAELMORA. You had best have left the army to its rest. There is no peacock can have his tail spread out ever and always. And mind what I say, it is a woman's trade to be making all easy for her comrade the time he has a mind to live easy. To go rising early, hunting, or fighting, he is well content to do it, if it is of himself he does it. But a woman to be rousing him at the calling of the pigeons to the dawn, and to be drawing down on him the work he has to do, he will think her the worst in the world.

GORMLEITH. I am wishful indeed to be pleasant to him. He was very good to me. The world never saw a better man.

MAELMORA. Give in to him now and humour him. If it pleases him to make much of learned men, let you yourself make more again of them. If it pleases him to be praying, let you be at hand to say out the Amen; and believe me you will put a net about him that will never give way.

GORMLEITH. Indeed I have striven these many years to be helpful to him. He used to be uneasy, not having me at his hand. I lived in his looks and he in mine.

MAELMORA. That is the way it should be. Let you keep on that road and you will never go astray.

GORMLEITH. But now it seems like as if my hold on him is going from me. His mind is as if slipping away to some place I cannot reach to, that I do not know.

MAELMORA. He is near spun out, and it is right for him to be attending to his soul. Do not be grudging him his own comfort in fasting and in psalms. To be worrying yourself starts wrinkles. Keep the flowery look in your face and do not be managing more than your share. Did you learn yet to put thread in a needle? The clasp is gone from this cloak. Have you e'er a one to give me before I will wear it again?

(SITRIC *moves and leans on elbow listening.*)

GORMLEITH. I will put my own clasp on it and welcome. When was the old one lost?

MAELMORA. It was in the journey this morning. My people and the people of the Desii were bringing the fir trees Brian had sent asking for, and a dispute arose who should take the lead. I was not willing there should be any delay, and I put my own shoulder under one of the trees.

GORMLEITH. You, my brother, put your shoulder under a load?

MAELMORA. There was no dispute after that who was to take the lead. But the branch of a tree caught in the clasp and dragged it, and it was lost.

GORMLEITH. You, the King of Leinster, carried a load of timber into Kincora! I will sew no clasp upon the cloak.

MAELMORA. I saw no shame doing that much for Brian that gave me my liberty and my life.

GORMLEITH. But I myself see great shame in it. I see you growing soft and gentle, like an old man that would be nearing his end.

MAELMORA. Quiet yourself, Gormleith. You were always wild in your young youth, dragging me there and hither from the nurses. You have had the tormenting of three husbands since that time. Leave your brother alone.

GORMLEITH. I will not give in to it! It is Brian is bringing you to it with the doing away of war. No marching and running and wrestling, but attending on the preaching of the friars. There is not a hound belonging to you dares so much as to follow a hare across the merings, without leave from the judges or the law. You are getting no fair play, closed in here and there, having no liberty in the way you used, to go out fighting for your own profit. I tell you, the time Brian will die from you, he will leave you weak and groping

and blind, your hands without strength or readiness, by reason of having slackened from the work. Drowsy you are growing the same as old spent men. The priest sounds the bell, and Brian follows it, and the rest of you follow after Brian.

MAELMORA. My poor Queen, I give you up altogether. You were surely born on a Friday, and the briars breaking through the green sod. Give me my cloak and I will go where the chess players are. Murrough called to me from there a while ago.

GORMLEITH. I will sew no clasp upon the cloak, or let you put it on you at all. It is no up-reared man it is fit for, but a serving man. Let the fire burn it to ashes, the fire is its fitting place.

(*She throws it in the fire and* MAELMORA *goes out.* SITRIC *rises up and comes forward.*)

SITRIC. That was good talk you were giving out to Maelmora. It is a queer thing a brother of your own to be some way sleepy and easy to satisfy.

GORMLEITH. I am no way to be blamed for my brother; but it would be right to put blame on me, my son to turn sluggish in the same way. And that is not a likely thing to happen. It is not my son that is without sap running in him. It is not a king's son of the Danes will content himself using meat, or stretched in sleep like a rich man, or calling out his sins like an old man, or a man on his last sick bed.

SITRIC. I knew well you would give your countenance to the work I have taken in hand.

GORMLEITH. What work is that?

SITRIC. I am come from joining with my own people. There was a ship of their ships came to Dublin, bringing presents for Brian, as was said. The whole of their ships are on their way. It is given out they are to make an attack upon Wales. It is not to Wales that they are going. When the Danes were driven out from here, there was no one of them gave up the claim to his land and its ownership. It is to get back their estates they are coming with their army at this time.

GORMLEITH. The Danes coming against us?

SITRIC. Brian will be left his own estate and his domain. Never fear, there will no harm happen him. He will be left with the most thing he cares for, with his churches and with his bells.

GORMLEITH. The Danes coming back to Ireland! That is a thing that must not happen! I will not let it be done! They must be driven back if they make any attempt to land.

SITRIC. It is at Clontarf they are coming to land. I myself am giving them my help, and I am expecting your own help.

GORMLEITH. You are out of your wits thinking that. You know well I will give you no help. What are you thinking to do is no less than treachery.

SITRIC. What way were you scolding at Maelmora this very minute, casting up against him that he was soft and peaceable, clogged with ease, doing nothing for his own hand? You were jibing at him because he gave in to Brian's law. I have my mind made up to break away from it, and you are no better content with myself. You know well you were calling out this good while, that nothing would serve the country but some war.

GORMLEITH. I tell you I will not let treachery be used by any one that is belonging to me. If I called for war, I did not call to you to bring it, but to leave it to the chances of the times.

SITRIC. If you had not led me to make sure of your help, why would I have promised to Sigurd Earl of Orkney and to Brodar of the Isle of Man?

GORMLEITH. You promised them that?

SITRIC. They asked a promise. Sigurd would not come join us without your call, he wrote his asking in this letter. Brodar wrote an asking of his own—there are the letters, you have to put your name to them. We have not so good a chance without having Brodar and Sigurd at our back.

GORMLEITH (*reading letters*). What daring they have, writing that! What sort are they thinking me to be? I will send them no answer at all. I will go and tell out the whole case to Brian. Let Brian himself send the answer.

SITRIC. Do so, and make ready a sheet for my burying. It is known I have been speaking with the messengers of the Danes. I am surely dead, or as good as dead, you making Brian uneasy and questioning.

GORMLEITH. Hurry, hurry then, go away out of this! I will not tell him until such time as you are safe. Make no delay! I must give the warning. He must lead his army to protect Clontarf. Go, hurry, make yourself safe.

SITRIC. Where would I go to? In what place would I be safe? Is it in Brian's country, hunted as an outlaw? Or with the Danes, telling them I had broken my promise and my word? I have no mind to go wandering, hiding in bushes and under rocks.

GORMLEITH. I will send you word if Brian goes against you—I will not let any harm fall on you. Go, now go.

SITRIC. I will not quit this place, until such time as your name is put to this letter and to that.

GORMLEITH. You are talking madness. That would be a treason out of measure! I am bound to Brian. I will be faithful to Brian. I am well pleased I turned against Malachi. I will never fail Brian or disappoint him.

BRENNAIN (*at door*). The High King is coming here, Queen, to take a view of the army from the door.

SITRIC. You have leave to give me up to him. I am well rewarded for taking heed to a woman's words. It is only a fool would pay attention to big words from any woman at all. Queen or no queen she will turn timorous, and run and fail you at the last.

BRIAN (*coming in*). You are welcome here, Sitric. Did you bring any strange news from Dublin? They were telling me you had calling on you some messengers of the Danes.

SITRIC. A ship that called to me with payments. They have sent back at your order the golden vessels and the painted books that were stolen from the churches in the time gone by. There are here a couple of the books. The vessels are weighty, they are at the door below. (*Shows books.*)

BRIAN. I am well pleased to get them. I would not wish those holy vessels to be left in any heathen hands. Go, Sitric, give them into the hands of the priests to be put in the chapel before the vespers will ring. I will call to the Bishops to consecrate them, coming back to the service of Christ.

SITRIC. The ship having left them, sailed away. (*Goes.*)

BRIAN. Take notice, Queen, that the men of the army have been gathered together according to your desire.

GORMLEITH (*at window*). I was looking at them a while ago. The hillsides are speckled with the troops of them.

BRIAN (*sitting down*). It is a comfortable thought it is only for show and for pleasure they are come. We have nothing to go out fighting for any more.

BRENNAIN. That is so, that is so, what need is there for fighting? Men of all learning struggling at the door, seven kings' messengers asking our friendship, a hundred cooks dressing the dinner, a tun of wine offered us for every day in the year. We will have to widen the whole world to hold Ireland, and to widen Ireland itself to hold Kincora!

GORMLEITH (*turning to* BRIAN). Come and look from the window. You can see a great throng of your men.

BRIAN. I think the time is come when I can let them all scatter to their own districts.

GORMLEITH. We have work for them to do together yet.

BRIAN. Their best work would be to put a thatch to their houses, and to turn all the wild scrub to barley gardens. What did the wandering woman say? To bring down Adam's Paradise again. I had some dream in the night time, it has gone from me—some dream of a place where war was not remembered.

GORMLEITH. It is best to keep our men to the work they are trained for, that is fighting.

BRIAN. I have made Ireland safe. I have put her name up among the nations. I have put on her the three crowns, the crown of wheat for strength, the crown of apples for pleasantness, the crown of lasting peace. I will break up the army for a year and a day. I will leave every man time to forgive his enemies, and to make his own settlement with God.

GORMLEITH (*coming to* BRIAN). You would make a great mistake doing that. I give you a strong advice to keep the army at its full strength. Believe me I am not without reason saying that.

BRIAN. Has there any news come to you of danger?

GORMLEITH. News, news, it is nothing new I am saying. Ireland has been fighting ten thousand years, and that custom to be changed, it is likely she would go to nothing. Peace, the priests have their tongues framed to it, peace, peace, peace. Is it certain it is so good a thing? Some that know all might not say that. It is in the sluggish time the little men grow to be many, and the great men give up living, and the trader has the sway. It is not you yourself would be satisfied, seeing that time to come.

BRIAN. I will be satisfied and well satisfied the time I will have shaped everything that is under me to the will of God. There is no fighting in that good place the Almighty has of his own.

GORMLEITH. This is the world and you cannot change the world's old custom. There must be fighting so long as there is anything at all worth fighting for. If there was not war in the world it would be right to make a war, to search out something to hate. Yes, I know all the talk of love and charity, but it is not of malice I am talking, but of the fury of a blast of wind against a heap of rotten dust. Keep your army ready to your hand now. Have you never a mind to go forcing the Cross on the nations of the East? Armenia, where the Holy Tree was put up, is owned now by heathens that deny it. Other uses to fail, that would be a great thing and a grand thing for your army to do.

BRIAN. If I had a score less of years upon me, that would be a good thing to do. But the time fails me, and I have no leave to do but the one thing. I have leave in my own narrow kingdom to begin the thousand years of peace.

GORMLEITH. Maybe some danger may rise up. We are never done with danger. Suppose now the Danes should come attacking, striving to win back what they have lost.

BRIAN. That is a thing will not happen.

GROMLEITH. They are coveting to get back their old estates—they will not give up what they owned so readily as you may think. They might send out a fleet of ships—they might make it out to be going to some other place—they might gather other leaders to their help. When all would seem safe and quiet, just as it does this day, they might come to land suddenly—giving no warning. Let you keep your men ready for that.

BRIAN. Sitric has but just come from seeing their messengers and speaking with them. He has the whole strand in his charge, he would know if there was any thought of an attack. There is no fear of the Danes.

GORMLEITH. Yes, yes, Sitric would know—then they cannot be coming. But the provinces? You said you would not take your hand from the work till you had made all quiet in the provinces. There is a stir in them. They are starting up against you here and there. They are going back to their lawless ways. There is a king of Burren wanting to force a rent on Galway. There are uproars and robberies in the north.

BRIAN. That is bad news, but it may not be true, it may have grown in the telling. Are you very certain it is true?

GORMLEITH. I am certain.

BRIAN. I am sorry indeed to hear that. I thought the very day had come when I could free myself from this (*touches sword*) altogether. But that hope was a deceit and a flattery.

GORMLEITH. Come out now and consult with the captains. Bid them make themselves ready to go and put down all these troubles.

BRIAN. If there is trouble to be put down I myself will go and do it. I will not slacken my hand so long as there is work to be done. But my heart is tired out with waiting for the keening and the treachery to be at an end.

GORMLEITH. Come out, come out before the door. They will give you a great welcome there.

(*They are going to door when* BRENNAIN *appears in it.*)

BRENNAIN. There is some one here that is asking to see the King.

GORMLEITH. The King cannot see any person at all at this time.

BRIAN. Who is it is wanting me?

BRENNAIN. The travelling woman was here a long time ago—she has the appearance of one that would be wasted and worn with the length of the road.

BRIAN. Bid her to come in. (BRENNAIN *turns and lifts hand,* BEGGAR *comes in.*)

BEGGAR. It is many long days since I saw you before, King Brian.

BRIAN. What have you been going through in all that time?

BEGGAR. Going on my two feet, tramping fro and hither, looking for the news would free you to sit down at the table of the angels.

BRIAN. Christ knows well I would hurry to that supper, and I being free to attend it. But I am hindered here and there. At this time the trouble and the disturbance is in the provinces of Ireland.

BEGGAR. There is no disturbance and no trouble.

BRIAN. What way can you know that?

BEGGAR (*holding up ring*). Are you remembering the ring you gave me? There it is before you. I had to hide it for a good while, the time of quiet was not come. But at the last I have walked the whole country, and I lifting it up in my hand.

BRIAN. Did you go with yourself only, without company?

BEGGAR. Through the five provinces I went, from this to Toraigh in the north and from that again to Cliona's Wave in the south, with no one but myself and the goodness of the Lord.

BRIAN. Did no one meddle with you?

BEGGAR. When I was passing through Connacht there were young men riding horses, and they came as if at me. But then they said: "We will leave her free seeing we ourselves are free and all Ireland is free."

BRENNAIN. That is good, that is good. If Connacht is quiet all Ireland is quiet.

BEGGAR. When I went down into the north I took notice of a troop of rough men and one of them said: "It is no harm to rob this girl that is of the province of Munster." But another man of them said: "Do not, for it is not to the north or the south we belong now, but to the whole of Ireland." And for the peace of the whole country, King Brian, they thank God and you.

BRIAN. That is a lucky journey you have made, and a great story you have brought me. Many a woman has sat beside a king through her lifetime, and has done less than that to be remembered by.

BEGGAR. You can put away your sword this time, and turn your face entirely towards Heaven.

GROMLEITH. The King has work to do yet. His life has not run to its end.

BEGGAR. You are out of it, Queen, his life is near its beginning—the beginning of the lasting life of Heaven.

GORMLEITH. You do well preaching quiet, and your own heart so uneasy. You run here and run there, changing and vanishing like the moon.

BEGGAR. I run towards my home that is in the place beyond. I will take my rest when I have reached my home. Now I will go, I have given my message to the King.

BRIAN. It is a great message you have carried. It is from beyond the world it is come. This great new peace was made for me beyond the world. I saw it in a vision of the night. It is your voice is calling it back to me.

BEGGAR. It is likely it was the one message sent by some other messenger.

BRIAN. I saw in my dream a woman coming to me, many coloured, changing, that was Aoibhell the friend of my race. She came and she called to me and swept the darkness away, and showed me the whole country, shining and beautiful, an image of the face of God in the smooth sea. All bad things had gone from it like plover to the north at the strengthening of the sun. The rowan berries on Slieve Echtge were the lasting fruits of Heaven. The Gael had grown to be fitting comrades for the white angels. I could hear the joyful singing of the birds of the Land of Promise.

BEGGAR. That was a good vision and a very good dream. Those that hear that music will never be satisfied in any place where it is not found.

BRIAN. It went from me then, and I cried out after it, but Aoibhell said: "It is only at Clontarf you will come again to that vision and that perfect peace."

BEGGAR. Why did she say Clontarf? I wonder what meaning she had in that.

BRIAN. It is often dreams have not a straight meaning, or waking breaks it. It is here at Kincora I have had a witness to the perfect peace and not at Clontarf. Now, now at last I can put away my sword!

BEGGAR. Give it here to me. Give me that sword, I will hang it here upon the wall. (*He gives it and she hangs it up.*).

GORMLEITH. Has the army that is outside gone from your mind?

BRIAN. I am going out to it now, it is the last time I will have

need of it. I will set every man of them free after the supper, that will be the feast of God's peace.

GORMLEITH. I ask of you, Brian, and I beg and I pray you to give in to what I say. I came here to put your name up, to bring you luck. I turned every stone for you, you will lose your name, you will lose me, oh, what can I say to turn you?

BRIAN. Have I and time not quieted this whirling heart? Go get yourself ready for the supper. Put on your silks and your jewels to do honour to it, your eyes are shining, they will shine out at the feast.

BEGGAR. Come, Brian, to the supper of the angels. To the Garden of Paradise and the branchy Tree of Life.

GORMLEITH. Go away, woman, out of this! He would listen to what would save him, and you not meddling! You are putting spells of weakness on him with your hymns. Do not let her entice you, Brian! Do not listen to that travelling woman of the roads, that tattered moon-mad beggar.

BRIAN. It is not her voice is calling to me but the voices from the place beyond.

BEGGAR (*at door*)

Gabriel, the Virgin's messenger, is come,
Michael, the rider of the speckled horse, is come.
Axal, the good steerer, Rafael of our love
Giving out the blessing for the supper of the King.

GORMLEITH. Go then, go, go to your destruction, drag the King to his destruction, let him go his own way! I do not begrudge it to him or to you. I tried to save him. He would not listen. He has made his choice, I am not in fault! The curse of Ireland be upon all beggars and their meddlings!

BRIAN (*turning back in doorway*). Go, Gormleith, to the church and pray, bend your knees, pray and repent, pray and repent, till the wildness has gone from your eyes and the pride from your heart, and the darkness from your vexed unhappy mind. (*He goes out.*)

GORMLEITH. Go then, go, I have done all I can do. I have done. I have no place and no part in you! I have not, I have not, I am done with Kincora. (*She throws herself in chair tearing her handkerchief in her rage.* MAELMORA *and* SITRIC *come in.*)

MAELMORA. We thought Brian was with you.

GORMLEITH. What brings you back here? Have you no more loads to carry? Why are you not carrying firing for the priests that have mastered your High King?

MAELMORA. This is a good welcome I am getting this day. Insults from you and insults from Murrough.

GORMLEITH. What did you do to anger your master's son?

SITRIC. He was watching Murrough at the chess and he gave an advice, and Murrough followed it and lost the game. Murrough was angry then.

MAELMORA. I would not stop to listen to him. He has no right to put insults on me.

GORMLEITH. He had a right to do it. You give in to a master that gives in to monks and beggars. It is certain you and Ireland were never under disgrace till now.

SITRIC. You will sign these letters now, I think, that you would not sign a while ago.

GORMLEITH. I will—I will! Give them to me quickly. He made little of me. He will be sorry. He bid me go and pray, he bid me repent. I will not, it is he himself will be made repent!

(*Takes up pen.*)

MAELMORA. What is it you are doing?

GORMLEITH. I am breaking away from Brian, I am breaking Brian's peace.

MAELMORA. You, his wife?

GORMLEITH. It was to a great king I came as a wife, not to a monkish man serving heaven on his knees.

MAELMORA (*holding her hand*). You must not go against him.—He that gave you all.

GORMLEITH. He has taken all away that was worth having.

SITRIC. Let her sign.

MAELMORA. This is no less than treachery.

GORMLEITH. Go and call your king, so, and give me up to him. (*She signs.*) Send the letters, Sitric, I am ready to go. (*Gets up.*)

MAELMORA. Where are you going?

GORMLEITH. To welcome the foreign armies that are on the sea now coming to Ireland.

MAELMORA. You must not do it! I will not let you be a traitor in this house.

GORMLEITH. Be a king again, Maelmora; join with us and fight in the old way. You yourself and Sitric could keep Ireland against all the world.

MAELMORA. I will call out to Brian.

GORMLEITH. You need not call to him. Here is Murrough his son, give us up to him, humble us before him. Humble yourself

before him, and let the son of the Connacht woman put bonds upon me and on my son.

(MURROUGH *comes in.* SITRIC *goes out quickly, hiding the letters.*)

MURROUGH. Are you giving advice to the Queen, Maelmora, as you gave it to me a while ago? I am ashamed that you vexed me then, but she seems twenty times more vexed.

MAELMORA. It is the Queen that is giving advice to me. It may be better for you if I do not take it.

MURROUGH. I am no good at guessing riddles. But if there is some threat in your voice I will answer it.

MAELMORA. Have a care now. You may thank the four bones of your father I did not answer you a while ago.

GORMLEITH. What was it he said to vex you?

MURROUGH. I said the King of Leinster was well able to give advice. I said it was good advice he gave his comrades, the Danes, the day they ran from us like scared sheep at Glenmama.

MAELMORA. It may happen us yet to meet in another battle, where it is not my men but your own men that will run like scattered sheep.

MURROUGH. When that battle is at hand, King, see that there is a good yew-tree near by, a tree where you can hide while your men are running as you hid yourself at Glenmama.

MAELMORA (*half drawing sword*). I will not lay a hand on you in this house; my answer will be in some place of battle.

MURROUGH. That answering will not be sooner than I wish it.

GORMLEITH. Its day will come sooner than you think.

MURROUGH. No, our ill-wishers do not come out against us now, they only plot and plan.

GORMLEITH. They are coming out now. They are coming to make their attack on you.

MURROUGH. I do not think so; they are afraid.

GORMLEITH. No, they are not afraid; you will not stand against them this time. They will sweep you and your race out of Ireland.

MURROUGH. Where are these great men coming from? Will the grass stalks turn to be an army?

GORMLEITH. I am giving you a last warning. They are on the sea now. The north wind is bringing them to Clontarf.

MURROUGH. That is the foolish talk of women in a parlour. Sitric would bring his men out from Dublin, they would have a rough landing at Clontarf. Where is Sitric? He has stolen away. Where is he gone?

GORMLEITH. Sitric is young, he is hardy; he would not sit down and count his beads through his life. The old have worn out their time, from this out is it for you and Sitric to strike the ball.

MAELMORA. This is no place for us now. Come away, Gormleith, out of this.

MURROUGH (*standing at the door*). No one must leave this till the King comes. (*Calls out*) Here, men, call in the King—hurry, there is trouble before him—tell him to make no delay.

GORMLEITH. I would not have crept out of the house secretly. I will tell him myself what I have done.

MURROUGH. You will not tell him of your treachery, and I that am not your friend will not tell him. I have no mind to scald my father's heart.

BRIAN (*coming in*). What is this call of trouble?

MURROUGH. The armies of the Gall are on their way to Ireland.

BRIAN. Are you sure of what you say?

MURROUGH. I have it from those that know. It is certain.

BRIAN. The army is ready, we are well prepared. Call in our advisers; I will see what is best to do. Come here to me, Gormleith, it is your hour now, you are very wary in giving advice and very brave in danger. Stay here beside me now while we make our plans.

GORMLEITH. I cannot—I do not know what to say—you made me angry. You must not trust me.

BRIAN. My heart has trusted you since we were linked in marriage, many long days ago. Sit here as you used—take that pen and mark down the orders for our troops. (*Takes pen and gives it to her.*)

GORMLEITH (*throwing it from her*). I cannot—oh, it must be stopped—they must be turned back—it is not too late—help me, Maelmora, Sitric must do as I bid him. Call him back—go after him, he must obey me—no, I will go myself. I will drag him back. Yes, Brian, you may trust me—I will stop him, everything will turn out well. (*She is going to the door when* MALACHI *appears in it.*) Who is that? Malachi!

MALACHI (*putting up his hand*). Stop where you are. I have a thing to say to the High King.

GORMLEITH. Oh, are you come for my destruction at the last?

MALACHI. I have heavy news for you, Brian. There is danger on its way towards us.

BRIAN. I got news of it on the minute. You are in time to help us. We are on the one side, we have had such dangers before this.

MALACHI. Are you very sure there are no traitors here to make our enemies welcome?

BRIAN. There should surely be some weighty reason urging you to give out such a word.

MALACHI. I would sooner some other one would ask, is there treachery within the very lintel of this door?

BRIAN. Maelmora, have you any answer to give to that?

MAELMORA. The time Murrough called to you, it was to tell what I was after telling him.

BRIAN. Murrough would not screen any traitor at all, whoever it might happen to be.

MURROUGH. Maelmora is in it—and——

BRIAN. And what other one?

MURROUGH. I am loth to say it. It is best for you to question her yourself.

BRIAN. Question her? Who is there to question? There is no woman here but the Queen.

GORMLEITH. Make an end of it, Murrough. Tell out what he is asking you to tell.

MURROUGH. Queen Gormleith is giving her own welcome to the Danes.

BRIAN. That is not possible, that is some great mistake. Tell him, Gormleith, it is a mistake and a lie.

GORMLEITH. He has told you no lie. The thing he has said is true.

BRIAN. It is not true. You are taking this thing on your own head with some thought of saving your son.

GORMLEITH. Ask King Malachi. He knows me, he made prophecies, he will tell you. I would sooner you to know the truth, and the end to have come and the finish. Tell it out, Malachi, I make no defence, and tell him along with that what wages are my due.

MALACHI. I am done with giving judgments this long time. It is God is the rightful judge.

GORMLEITH. I did it and I did not do it, Brian—I was not entirely to blame. I thought myself to be wise, to drag things here and there, to do some great thing, moving men with big words. Oh, I have pulled down the rafters of the roof that sheltered me! (*She is putting out her hand to* BRIAN *but* MALACHI *goes between.*)

BRIAN. Let her go, let no one lay a hand on her. And may God have mercy on every woman's vain changing heart!

GORMLEITH. Do not say that, Brian, do not think it, it was not

my heart that changed, it was anger and jealousy made me crazy at the time.

(BRIAN'S *head has sunk in his hands.* MALACHI *gently leads her towards the door.*)

MALACHI. Go now as he has given you leave. Go free, if freedom can profit you, a broken woman, a spoiled queen, travelling the roads of the world. God is the judge. You were maybe misled, made use of, others putting it on you that you yourself were doing all.

GORMLEITH. No, Malachi, I did my own part, I have no mind to deny or to hide my own share in it at all. You promised Brian I would turn my hand against him, and I thought that a thing was not possible, and I did it against him in the end. Listen now to this. Brodar of Manannan's Island would not give his aid to the Danes unless I promised him myself, and I promised it. I put my own hand to that. Sigurd, Earl of Orkney, asked the same promise, and I gave it. I did not leave any lie on you at all—your words have come around. There will be fighting for me yet! Fighting for me and about me. Are you satisfied now, Malachi of the foretellings?

MALACHI. Look at the work you have done. (*He points to* BRIAN.) Go out and hang your head for shame. The man that was steady and strong is broken. It is hardly he will reach to the battle.

GORMLEITH. No fear, no fear, Brian will reach to the battle. There is no fear at all of him not doing that. It is not Brian would wish to die the death of a man that is lessening and stiffening, the time he grows attentive to his bed, but of a winner that is merry and shouting, the time his enemies are put down. I was maybe a right wife for him. A right wife, a lucky wife, in spite of all! (*Goes out.*)

MALACHI (*going to* BRIAN *and putting hand on his shoulder*). Lift up your head, Brian.

BRIAN. The blame is on me. It is I myself have betrayed my people. War, war, keening and treachery, Ireland red again, red and stained through and through—trouble and treachery and war.

MALACHI. Make ready your orders for the army.

BRIAN. Is all ready for the Queen's journey? Give her the horses from Connacht.

MALACHI. Listen to what I say, we must send messengers.

BRIAN. The speckled horses, she liked them best, and the carved chariot from the north.

MALACHI. Attend to what I am saying.

BRIAN. But who was it, who was it, that called in the Gall?

MALACHI. I cannot rouse him. It is no wonder. That treachery was too hard a blow.

(MURROUGH *comes in with standard in hand and stands on threshold. Spears and banners appear at window. War march is played.*)

BRIAN (*standing up*). But what did the dream mean? What did Aoibhell mean? She promised me lasting peace, lasting peace; she told it to me in my dream. (*He walks towards door.*) What did she mean? Is there no truth? Is every one treacherous? (*He comes face to face with* MURROUGH and stands still.)

MURROUGH. The army is ready, we must lead it to meet the Danes at Clontarf.

BRIAN (*standing very strong and straight*). Clontarf? Now I know what Aoibhell meant. She said it was at Clontarf I would find peace. That is well. My place is ready among the generations; Cathal, son of Aedh, Corc, son of Anluan, Lorcan, son of Luchta, Mahon, son of Cennedigh, all the race of Lugaidh reigned in this place, and went out of this door for the last time; and the traitors that betrayed them, and the women they loved. Give me my sword. (MALACHI *takes it down and gives it to him.*) It has another battle to win.

Curtain.

HYACINTH HALVEY

PERSONS:

HYACINTH HALVEY
JAMES QUIRKE, *a butcher*
FARDY FARRELL, *a telegraph boy*
SERGEANT CARDEN
MRS. DELANE, *Postmistress at Cloon*
MISS JOYCE, *the Priest's House-keeper*

SCENE: *Outside the Post Office at the little town of Cloon.* MRS. DELANE *at Post Office door.* MR. QUIRKE *sitting on a chair at butcher's door. A dead sheep hanging beside it, and a thrush in a cage above.* FARDY FARRELL *playing on mouth organ. Train whistle heard.*

MRS. DELANE. There is the four o'clock train, Mr. Quirke.

MR. QUIRKE. Is it now, Mrs. Delane, and I not long after rising? It makes a man drowsy to be doing the half of his work in the night time. Going about the country, looking for little stags of sheep, striving to knock a few shillings together. That contract for the soldiers gives me a great deal to attend to.

MRS. DELANE. I suppose so. It's hard enough on myself to be down ready for the mail car in the morning, sorting letters in the half dark. It's often I haven't time to look who are the letters from —or the cards.

MR. QUIRKE. It would be a pity you not to know any little news might be knocking about. If you did not have information of what is going on who should have it? Was it you, ma'am, was telling me that the new Sub-Sanitary Inspector would be arriving to-day?

MRS. DELANE. To-day it is he is coming, and it's likely he was in that train. There was a card about him to Sergeant Carden this morning.

MR. QUIRKE. A young chap from Carrow they were saying he was.

MRS. DELANE. So he is, one Hyacinth Halvey; and indeed if all that is said of him is true, or if a quarter of it is true, he will be a credit to this town.

MR. QUIRKE. Is that so?

MRS. DELANE. Testimonials he has by the score. To Father Gregan they were sent. Registered they were coming and going. Would you believe me telling you that they weighed up to three pounds?

MR. QUIRKE. There must be great bulk in them indeed.

MRS. DELANE. It is no wonder he to get the job. He must have a great character so many persons to write for him as what there did.

FARDY. It would be a great thing to have a character like that.

MRS. DELANE. Indeed I am thinking it will be long before you will get the like of it, Fardy Farrell.

FARDY. If I had the like of that character it is not here carrying messages I would be. It's in Noonan's Hotel I would be, driving cars.

MR. QUIRKE. Here is the priest's housekeeper coming.

MRS. DELANE. So she is; and there is the Sergeant a little while after her.

(*Enter Miss Joyce.*)

MRS. DELANE. Good-evening to you, Miss Joyce. What way is his Reverence to-day? Did he get any ease from the cough?

MISS JOYCE. He did not indeed, Mrs. Delane. He has it sticking to him yet. Smothering he is in the night time. The most thing he comes short in is the voice.

MRS. DELANE. I am sorry, now, to hear that. He should mind himself well.

MISS JOYCE. It's easy to say let him mind himself. What do you say to him going to the meeting to-night? (*Sergeant comes in.*) It's for his Reverence's *Freeman* I am come, Mrs. Delane.

MRS. DELANE. Here it is ready. I was just throwing an eye on it to see was there any news. Good-evening, Sergeant.

SERGEANT (*holding up a placard*). I brought this notice, Mrs. Delane, the announcement of the meeting to be held to-night in the Courthouse. You might put it up here convenient to the window. I hope you are coming to it yourself?

MRS. DELANE. I will come, and welcome. I would do more than that for you, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. And you, Mr. Quirke.

MR. QUIRKE. I'll come, to be sure. I forget what's this the meeting is about.

SERGEANT. The Department of Agriculture is sending round a lecturer in furtherance of the moral development of the rural

classes. (*Reads.*) "A lecture will be given this evening in Cloon Courthouse, illustrated by magic lantern slides—" Those will not be in it; I am informed they were all broken in the first journey, the railway company taking them to be eggs. The subject of the lecture is "The Building of Character."

MRS. DELANE. Very nice, indeed. I knew a girl lost her character, and she washed her feet in a blessed well after, and it dried up on the minute.

SERGEANT. The arrangements have all been left to me, the Archdeacon being away. He knows I have a good intellect for things of the sort. But the loss of those slides puts a man out. The thing people will not see it is not likely it is the thing they will believe. I saw what they call tableaux—standing pictures, you know—one time in Dundrum——

MRS. DELANE. Miss Joyce was saying Father Gregan is supporting you.

SERGEANT. I am accepting his assistance. No bigotry about me when there is a question of the welfare of any fellow-creatures. Orange and green will stand together to-night. I myself and the station-master on the one side; your parish priest in the chair.

MISS JOYCE. If his Reverence would mind me he would not quit the house to-night. He is no more fit to go speak at a meeting than (*pointing to the one hanging outside Quirke's door*) that sheep.

SERGEANT. I am willing to take the responsibility. He will have no speaking to do at all, unless it might be to bid them give the lecturer a hearing. The loss of those slides now is a great annoyance to me—and no time for anything. The lecturer will be coming by the next train.

MISS JOYCE. Who is this coming up the street, Mrs. Delane?

MRS. DELANE. I wouldn't doubt it to be the new Sub-Sanitary Inspector. Was I telling you of the weight of the testimonials he got, Miss Joyce?

MISS JOYCE. Sure I heard the curate reading them to his Reverence. He must be a wonder for principles.

MRS. DELANE. Indeed it is what I was saying to myself, he must be a very saintly young man.

(*Enter Hyacinth Halvey. He carries a small bag and a large brown paper parcel. He stops and nods bashfully.*)

HYACINTH. Good-evening to you. I was bid to come to the post office——

SERGEANT. I suppose you are Hyacinth Halvey? I had a letter about you from the Resident Magistrate.

HYACINTH. I heard he was writing. It was my mother got a friend he deals with to ask him.

SERGEANT. He gives you a very high character.

HYACINTH. It is very kind of him indeed, and he not knowing me at all. But indeed all the neighbours were very friendly. Anything any one could do to help me they did it.

MRS. DELANE. I'll engage it is the testimonials you have in your parcel? I know the wrapping paper, but they grew in bulk since I handled them.

HYACINTH. Indeed I was getting them to the last. There was not one refused me. It is what my mother was saying, a good character is no burden.

FARDY. I would believe that indeed.

SERGEANT. Let us have a look at the testimonials. (*Hyacinth Halvey opens parcel, and a large number of envelopes fall out.*)

SERGEANT (*opening and reading one by one*). "He possesses the fire of the Gael, the strength of the Norman, the vigour of the Dane, the stolidity of the Saxon"——

HYACINTH. It was the Chairman of the Poor Law Guardians wrote that.

SERGEANT. "A magnificent example to old and young"——

HYACINTH. That was the Secretary of the De Wet Hurling Club——

SERGEANT. "A shining example of the value conferred by an eminently careful and high class education"——

HYACINTH. That was the National Schoolmaster.

SERGEANT. "Devoted to the highest ideals of his Mother-land to such an extent as is compatible with a hitherto non-parliamentary career"——

HYACINTH. That was the Member for Carrow.

SERGEANT. "A splendid exponent of the purity of the race"——

HYACINTH. The Editor of the *Carrow Champion.*

SERGEANT. "Admirably adapted for the efficient discharge of all possible duties that may in future be laid upon him"——

HYACINTH. The new Station-master.

SERGEANT. "A champion of every cause that can legitimately benefit his fellow-creatures"—— Why, look here, my man, you are the very one to come to our assistance to-night.

HYACINTH. I would be glad to do that. What way can I do it?

SERGEANT. You are a newcomer—your example would carry

weight—you must stand up as a living proof of the beneficial effect of a high character, moral fibre, temperance—there is something about it here I am sure—(*Looks.*) I am sure I saw "unparalleled temperance" in some place——

HYACINTH. It was my mother's cousin wrote that—I am no drinker, but I haven't the pledge taken——

SERGEANT. You might take it for the purpose.

MR. QUIRKE (*eagerly*). Here is an anti-treating button. I was made a present of it by one of my customers—I'll give it to you (*sticks it in Hyacinth's coat*) and welcome.

SERGEANT. That is it. You can wear the button on the platform —or a bit of blue ribbon—hundreds will follow your example—I know the boys from the Workhouse will——

HYACINTH. I am in no way wishful to be an example——

SERGEANT. I will read extracts from the testimonials. "There he is," I will say, "an example of one in early life who by his own unaided efforts and his high character has obtained a profitable situation"—(*Slaps his side.*) I know what I'll do. I'll engage a few corner-boys from Noonan's bar, just as they are, greasy and sodden, to stand in a group—there will be the contrast—The sight will deter others from a similar fate—That's the way to do a tableau —I knew I could turn out a success.

HYACINTH. I wouldn't like to be a contrast——

SERGEANT (*puts testimonials in his pocket*). I will go now and engage those lads—sixpence each, and well worth it—Nothing like an example for the rural classes.

(*Goes off, Hyacinth feebly trying to detain him.*)

MRS. DELANE. A very nice man indeed. A little high up in himself, may be. I'm not one that blames the police. Sure they have their own bread to earn like every other one. And indeed it is often they will let a thing pass.

MR. QUIRKE (*gloomily*). Sometimes they will, and more times they will not.

MISS JOYCE. And where will you be finding a lodging, Mr. Halvey?

HYACINTH. I was going to ask that myself, ma'am. I don't know the town.

MISS JOYCE. I know of a good lodging, but it is only a very good man would be taken into it.

MRS. DELANE. Sure there could be no objection there to Mr. Halvey. There is no appearance on him but what is good, and the Sergeant after taking him up the way he is doing.

MISS JOYCE. You will be near to the Sergeant in the lodging I speak of. The house is convenient to the barracks.

HYACINTH (*doubtfully*). To the barracks?

MISS JOYCE. Alongside of it and the barrack yard behind. And that's not all. It is opposite to the priest's house.

HYACINTH. Opposite, is it?

MISS JOYCE. A very respectable place, indeed, and a very clean room you will get. I know it well. The curate can see into it from his window.

HYACINTH. Can he now?

FARDY. There was a good many, I am thinking, went into that lodging and left it after.

MISS JOYCE (*sharply*). It is a lodging you will never be let into or let stop in, Fardy. If they did go they were a good riddance.

FARDY. John Hart, the plumber, left it——

MISS JOYCE. If he did it was because he dared not pass the police coming in, as he used, with a rabbit he was after snaring in his hand.

FARDY. The schoolmaster himself left it.

MISS JOYCE. He needn't have left it if he hadn't taken to card-playing. What way could you say your prayers, and shadows shuffling and dealing before you on the blind?

HYACINTH. I think maybe I'd best look around a bit before I'll settle in a lodging——

MISS JOYCE. Not at all. *You* won't be wanting to pull down the blind.

MRS. DELANE. It is not likely *you* will be snaring rabbits.

MISS JOYCE. Or bringing in a bottle and taking an odd glass the way James Kelly did.

MRS. DELANE. Or writing threatening notices, and the police taking a view of you from the rear.

MISS JOYCE. Or going to roadside dances, or running after good-for-nothing young girls——

HYACINTH. I give you my word I'm not so harmless as you think.

MRS. DELANE. Would you be putting a lie on these, Mr. Halvey? (*Touching testimonials.*) I know well the way *you* will be spending the evenings, writing letters to your relations——

MISS JOYCE. Learning O'Growney's exercises——

MRS. DELANE. Sticking post cards in an album for the convent bazaar.

MISS JOYCE. Reading the *Catholic Young Man*——

MRS. DELANE. Playing the melodies on a melodeon——

MISS JOYCE. Looking at the pictures in the *Lives of the Saints*. I'll hurry on and engage the room for you.

HYACINTH. Wait. Wait a minute——

MISS JOYCE. No trouble at all. I told you it was just opposite. (*Goes.*)

MR. QUIRKE. I suppose I must go upstairs and ready myself for the meeting. If it wasn't for the contract I have for the soldiers' barracks and the Sergeant's good word, I wouldn't go anear it (*Goes into shop.*)

MRS. DELANE. I should be making myself ready too. I must be in good time to see you being made an example of, Mr. Halvey. It is I myself was the first to say it; you will be a credit to the town. (*Goes.*)

HYACINTH (*in a tone of agony*). I wish I had never seen Cloon.

FARDY. What is on you?

HYACINTH. I wish I had never left Carrow. I wish I had been drowned the first day I thought of it, and I'd be better off.

FARDY. What is it ails you?

HYACINTH. I wouldn't for the best pound ever I had be in this place to-day.

FARDY. I don't know what you are talking about.

HYACINTH. To have left Carrow, if it was a poor place, where I had my comrades, and an odd spree, and a game of cards—and a coursing match coming on, and I promised a new greyhound from the city of Cork. I'll die in this place, the way I am. I'll be too much closed in.

FARDY. Sure it mightn't be as bad as what you think.

HYACINTH. Will you tell me, I ask you, what way can I undo it?

FARDY. What is it you are wanting to undo?

HYACINTH. Will you tell me what way can I get rid of my character?

FARDY. To get rid of it, is it?

HYACINTH. That is what I said. Aren't you after hearing the great character they are after putting on me?

FARDY. That is a good thing to have.

HYACINTH. It is not. It's the worst in the world. If I hadn't it, I wouldn't be like a prize mangold at a show with every person praising me.

FARDY. If I had it, I wouldn't be like a head in a barrel, with every person making hits at me.

HYACINTH. If I hadn't it, I wouldn't be shoved into a room with all the clergy watching me and the police in the back yard.

FARDY. If I had it, I wouldn't be but a message-carrier now, and a clapper scaring birds in the summer time.

HYACINTH. If I hadn't it, I wouldn't be wearing this button and brought up for an example at the meeting.

FARDY (*whistles*). Maybe you're not, so, what those papers make you out to be?

HYACINTH. How would I be what they make me out to be? Was there ever any person of that sort since the world was a world, unless it might be Saint Antony of Padua looking down from the chapel wall? If it is like that I was, isn't it in Mount Melleray I would be, or with the Friars at Esker? Why would I be living in the world at all, or doing the world's work?

FARDY (*taking up parcel*). Who would think, now, there would be so much lies in a small place like Carrow?

HYACINTH. It was my mother's cousin did it. He said I was not reared for labouring—he gave me a new suit and bid me never to come back again. I daren't go back to face him—the neighbours knew my mother had a long family—bad luck to them the day they gave me these. (*Tears letters and scatters them.*) I'm done with testimonials. They won't be here to bear witness against me.

FARDY. The Sergeant thought them to be great. Sure he has the samples of them in his pocket. There's not one in the town but will know before morning that you are the next thing to an earthly saint.

HYACINTH (*stamping*). I'll stop their mouths. I'll show them I can be a terror for badness. I'll do some injury. I'll commit some crime. The first thing I'll do I'll go and get drunk. If I never did it before I'll do it now. I'll get drunk—then I'll make an assault—I tell you I'd think as little of taking a life as of blowing out a candle.

FARDY. If you get drunk you are done for. Sure that will be held up after as an excuse for any breaking of the law.

HYACINTH. I will break the law. Drunk or sober I'll break it. I'll do something that will have no excuse. What would you say is the worst crime that any man can do?

FARDY. I don't know. I heard the Sergeant saying one time it was to obstruct the police in the discharge of their duty——

HYACINTH. That won't do. It's a patriot I would be then, worse than before, with my picture in the weeklies. It's a red crime I must commit that will make all respectable people quit minding me. What can I do? Search your mind now.

FARDY. It's what I heard the old people saying there could be no worse crime than to steal a sheep——

HYACINTH. I'll steal a sheep—or a cow—or a horse—if that will leave me the way I was before.

FARDY. It's maybe in gaol it will leave you.

HYACINTH. I don't care—I'll confess—I'll tell why I did it—I give you my word I would as soon be picking oakum or breaking stones as to be perched in the daylight the same as that bird, and all the town chirruping to me or bidding me chirrup——

FARDY. There is reason in that, now.

HYACINTH. Help me, will you?

FARDY. Well, if it is to steal a sheep you want, you haven't far to go.

HYACINTH (*looking round wildly*). Where is it? I see no sheep.

FARDY. Look around you.

HYACINTH. I see no living thing but that thrush——

FARDY. Did I say it was living? What is that hanging on Quirke's rack?

HYACINTH. It's (*fingers it*) a sheep, sure enough——

FARDY. Well, what ails you that you can't bring it away?

HYACINTH. It's a dead one——

FARDY. What matter if it is?

HYACINTH. If it was living I could drive it before me——

FARDY. You could. Is it to your own lodging you would drive it? Sure everyone would take it to be a pet you brought from Carrow?

HYACINTH. I suppose they might.

FARDY. Miss Joyce sending in for news of it and it bleating behind the bed.

HYACINTH (*distracted*). Stop! stop!

MRS. DELANE (*from upper window*). Fardy! Are you there, Fardy Farrell?

FARDY. I am, ma'am.

MRS. DELANE (*from window*). Look and tell me is that the telegraph I hear ticking?

FARDY (*looking in at door*). It is, ma'am.

MRS. DELANE. Then botheration to it, and I not dressed or undressed. Wouldn't you say, now, it's to annoy me it is calling me down. I'm coming! I'm coming! (*Disappears.*)

FARDY. Hurry on, now! hurry! She'll be coming out on you. If you are going to do it, do it, and if you are not, let it alone.

HYACINTH. I'll do it! I'll do it!

FARDY (*lifting the sheep on his back*). I'll give you a hand with it.

HYACINTH (*goes a step or two and turns round*). You told me no place where I could hide it.

FARDY. You needn't go far. There is the church beyond at the side of the Square. Go round to the ditch behind the wall—there's nettles in it.

HYACINTH. That'll do.

FARDY. She's coming out—run! run!

HYACINTH (*runs a step or two*). It's slipping!

FARDY. Hoist it up! I'll give it a hoist! (*Halvey runs out.*)

MRS. DELANE (*calling out*). What are you doing Fardy Farrell? Is it idling you are?

FARDY. Waiting I am, ma'am, for the message——

MRS. DELANE. Never mind the message yet. Who said it was ready? (*Going to door.*) Go ask for the loan of—no, but ask news of—Here, now go bring that bag of Mr. Halvey's to the lodging Miss Joyce has taken——

FARDY. I will, ma'am. (*Takes bag and goes out.*)

MRS. DELANE (*coming out with a telegram in her hand*). Nobody here? (*Looks round and calls cautiously.*) Mr. Quirke! Mr. Quirke! James Quirke!

MR. QUIRKE (*looking out of his upper window with soap-suddy face*). What is it, Mrs. Delane?

MRS. DELANE (*beckoning*). Come down here till I tell you.

MR. QUIRKE. I cannot do that. I'm not fully shaved.

MRS. DELANE. You'd come if you knew the news I have.

MR. QUIRKE. Tell it to me now. I'm not so supple as I was.

MRS. DELANE. Whisper now, have you an enemy in any place?

MR. QUIRKE. It's likely I may have. A man in business——

MRS. DELANE. I was thinking you had one.

MR. QUIRKE. Why would you think that at this time more than any other time?

MRS. DELANE. If you could know what is in this envelope you would know that, James Quirke.

MR. QUIRKE. Is that so? And what, now, is there in it?

MRS. DELANE. Who do you think now is it addressed to?

MR. QUIRKE. How would I know that, and I not seeing it?

MRS. DELANE. That is true. Well, it is a message from Dublin Castle to the Sergeant of Police!

MR. QUIRKE. To Sergeant Carden, is it?

MRS. DELANE. It is. And it concerns yourself.

MR. QUIRKE. Myself, is it? What accusation can they be bringing against me? I'm a peaceable man.

MRS. DELANE. Wait till you hear.

MR. QUIRKE. Maybe they think I was in that moonlighting case——

MRS. DELANE. That is not it——

MR. QUIRKE. I was not in it—I was but in the neighbouring field —cutting up a dead cow, that those never had a hand in——

MRS. DELANE. You're out of it——

MR. QUIRKE. They had their faces blackened. There is no man can say I recognized them.

MRS. DELANE. That's not what they're saying——

MR. QUIRKE. I'll swear I did not hear their voices or know them if I did hear them.

MRS. DELANE. I tell you it has nothing to do with that. It might be better for you if it had.

MR. QUIRKE. What is it, so?

MRS. DELANE. It is an order to the Sergeant bidding him immediately to seize all suspicious meat in your house. There is an officer coming down. There are complaints from the Shannon Fort Barracks.

MR. QUIRKE. I'll engage it was that pork.

MRS. DELANE. What ailed it for them to find fault?

MR. QUIRKE. People are so hard to please nowadays, and I recommended them to salt it.

MRS. DELANE. They had a right to have minded your advice.

MR. QUIRKE. There was nothing on that pig at all but that it went mad on poor O'Grady that owned it.

MRS. DELANE. So I heard, and went killing all before it.

MR. QUIRKE. Sure it's only in the brain madness can be. I heard the doctor saying that.

MRS. DELANE. He should know.

MR. QUIRKE. I give you my word I cut the head off it. I went to the loss of it, throwing it to the eels in the river. If they had salted the meat, as I advised them, what harm would it have done to any person on earth?

MRS. DELANE. I hope no harm will come on poor Mrs. Quirke and the family.

MR. QUIRKE. Maybe it wasn't that but some other thing——

MRS. DELANE. Here is Fardy. I must send the message to the Sergeant. Well, Mr. Quirke, I'm glad I had the time to give you a warning.

MR. QUIRKE. I'm obliged to you, indeed. You were always very neighbourly, Mrs. Delane. Don't be too quick now sending the message. There is just one article I would like to put away out of the house before the Sergeant will come. (*Enter Fardy.*)

MRS. DELANE. Here now, Fardy—that's not the way you're going to the barracks. Anyone would think you were scaring birds yet. Put on your uniform (*Fardy goes into office.*) You have this message to bring to the Sergeant of Police. Get your cap now, it's under the counter.

(*Fardy reappears, and she gives him telegram.*)

FARDY. I'll bring it to the station. It's there he was going.

MRS. DELANE. You will not, but to the barracks. It can wait for him there.

(*Fardy goes off. Mr. Quirke has appeared at door.*)

MR. QUIRKE. It was indeed a very neighbourly act, Mrs. Delane, and I'm obliged to you. There is just *one* article to put out of the way. The Sergeant may look about him then and welcome. It's well I cleared the premises on yesterday. A consignment to Birmingham I sent. The Lord be praised isn't England a terrible country with all it consumes?

MRS. DELANE. Indeed you always treat the neighbours very decent, Mr. Quirke, not asking them to buy from you.

MR. QUIRKE. Just one article. (*Turns to rack.*) That sheep I brought in last night. It was for a charity indeed I bought it from the widow woman at Kiltartan Cross. Where would the poor make a profit out of their dead meat without me? Where now is it? Well, now, I could have swore that that sheep was hanging there on the rack when I went in——

MRS. DELANE. You must have put it in some other place.

MR. QUIRKE (*going in and searching and coming out*). I did not; there is no other place for me to put it. Is it gone blind I am, or is it not in it, it is?

MRS. DELANE. It's not there now anyway.

MR. QUIRKE. Didn't you take notice of it there yourself this morning?

MRS. DELANE. I have it in my mind that I did; but it's not there now.

MR. QUIRKE. There was no one here could bring it away?

MRS. DELANE. Is it me myself you suspect of taking it, James Quirke?

MR. QUIRKE. Where is it at all? It is certain it was not of itself it walked away. It was dead, and very dead, the time I bought it.

MRS. DELANE. I have a pleasant neighbour indeed that accuses me that I took his sheep. I wonder, indeed, you to say a thing like that! I to steal your sheep or your rack or anything that belongs to you or to your trade! Thank you, James Quirke. I am much obliged to you indeed.

MR. QUIRKE. Ah, be quiet woman; be quiet——

MRS. DELANE. And let me tell you, James Quirke, that I would sooner starve and see everyone belonging to me starve than to eat the size of a thimble of any joint that ever was on your rack or that ever will be on it, whatever the soldiers may eat that have no other thing to get, or the English that devour all sorts, or the poor ravenous people that's down by the sea! (*She turns to go into shop.*)

MR. QUIRKE (*stopping her*). Don't be talking foolishness, woman. Who said you took my meat? Give heed to me now. There must some other message have come. The Sergeant must have got some other message.

MRS. DELANE (*sulkily*). If there is any way for a message to come that is quicker than to come by the wires, tell me what it is and I'll be obliged to you.

MR. QUIRKE. The Sergeant was up here making an excuse he was sticking up that notice. What was he doing here, I ask you?

MRS. DELANE. How would I know what brought him?

MR. QUIRKE. It is what he did; he made as if to go away—he turned back again and I shaving—he brought away the sheep—he will have it for evidence against me——

MRS. DELANE (*interested*). That might be so.

MR. QUIRKE. I would sooner it to have been any other beast nearly ever I had upon the rack.

MRS. DELANE. Is that so?

MR. QUIRKE. I bade the Widow Early to kill it a fortnight ago—but she would not, she was that covetous!

MRS. DELANE. What was on it?

MR. QUIRKE. How would I know what was on it? Whatever was on it, it was the will of God put it upon it—wasted it was, and shivering and refusing its share.

MRS. DELANE. The poor thing.

MR. QUIRKE. Gone all to nothing—wore away like a flock of thread. It did not weigh as much as a lamb of two months.

MRS. DELANE. It is likely the Inspector will bring it to Dublin?

MR. QUIRKE. The ribs of it streaky with the dint of patent medicines——

MRS. DELANE. I wonder is it to the Petty Sessions you'll be brought or is it to the Assizes?

MR. QUIRKE. I'll speak up to them. I'll make my defence. What can the Army expect at fippence a pound?

MRS. DELANE. It is likely there will be no bail allowed?

MR. QUIRKE. Would they be wanting me to give them good quality meat out of my own pocket? Is it to encourage them to fight the poor Indians and Africans they would have me? It's the Anti-Enlisting Societies should pay the fine for me.

MRS. DELANE. It's not a fine will be put on you, I'm afraid. It's five years in gaol you will be apt to be getting. Well, I'll try and be a good neighbour to poor Mrs. Quirke.

(MR. QUIRKE, *who has been stamping up and down, sits down and weeps.* HALVEY *comes in and stands on one side.*)

MR. QUIRKE. Hadn't I heart-scalding enough before, striving to rear five weak children?

MRS. DELANE. I suppose they will be sent to the Industrial Schools?

MR. QUIRKE. My poor wife——

MRS. DELANE. I'm afraid the workhouse——

MR. QUIRKE. And she out in an ass-car at this minute helping me to follow my trade.

MRS. DELANE. I hope they will not arrest her along with you.

MR. QUIRKE. I'll give myself up to justice. I'll plead guilty! I'll be recommended to mercy!

MRS. DELANE. It might be best for you.

MR. QUIRKE. Who would think so great a misfortune could come upon a family through the bringing away of one sheep!

HYACINTH (*coming forward*). Let you make yourself easy.

MR. QUIRKE. Easy! It's easy to say let you make yourself easy.

HYACINTH. I can tell you where it is.

MR. QUIRKE. Where what is?

HYACINTH. The sheep you are fretting after.

MR. QUIRKE. What do you know about it?

HYACINTH. I know everything about it.

MR. QUIRKE. I suppose the Sergeant told you?

HYACINTH. He told me nothing.

MR. QUIRKE. I suppose the whole town knows it, so?

HYACINTH. No one knows it, as yet.

MR. QUIRKE. And the Sergeant didn't see it?

HYACINTH. No one saw it or brought it away but myself.

MR. QUIRKE. Where did you put it at all?

HYACINTH. In the ditch behind the church wall. In among the nettles it is. Look at the way they have me stung. (*Holds out hands.*)

MR. QUIRKE. In the ditch! The best hiding place in the town.

HYACINTH. I never thought it would bring such great trouble upon you. You can't say anyway I did not tell you.

MR. QUIRKE. You yourself that brought it away and that hid it! I suppose it was coming in the train you got information about the message to the police.

HYACINTH. What now do you say to me?

MR. QUIRKE. Say! I say I am as glad to hear what you said as if it was the Lord telling me I'd be in heaven this minute.

HYACINTH. What are you going to do to me?

MR. QUIRKE. Do, is it? (*Grasps his hand.*) Any earthly thing you would wish me to do. I will do it.

HYACINTH. I suppose you will tell——

MR. QUIRKE. Tell! It's I that will tell when all is quiet. It is I will give you the good name through the town!

HYACINTH. I don't well understand.

MR. QUIRKE (*embracing him*). The man that preserved me!

HYACINTH. That preserved you?

MR. QUIRKE. That kept me from ruin!

HYACINTH. From ruin?

MR. QUIRKE. That saved me from disgrace!

HYACINTH (*to* MRS. DELANE). What is he saying at all?

MR. QUIRKE. From the Inspector!

HYACINTH. What is he talking about?

MR. QUIRKE. From the magistrates!

HYACINTH. He is making some mistake.

MR. QUIRKE. From the Winter Assizes!

HYACINTH. Is he out of his wits?

MR. QUIRKE. Five years in gaol!

HYACINTH. Hasn't he the queer talk?

MR. QUIRKE. The loss of the contract!

HYACINTH. Are my own wits gone astray?

MR. QUIRKE. What way can I repay you?

HYACINTH (*shouting*). I tell you I took the sheep——

MR. QUIRKE. You did, God reward you!

HYACINTH. I stole away with it——

MR. QUIRKE. The blessing of the poor on you!

HYACINTH. I put it out of sight——

MR. QUIRKE. The blessing of my five children——

HYACINTH. I may as well say nothing——

MRS. DELANE. Let you be quiet now, Quirke. Here's the Sergeant coming to search the shop——

(SERGEANT *comes in:* QUIRKE *leaves go of* HALVEY, *who arranges his hat, etc.*)

SERGEANT. The Department to blazes!

MRS. DELANE. What is it is putting you out?

SERGEANT. To go to the train to meet the lecturer, and there to get a message through the guard that he was unavoidably detained in the South, holding an inquest on the remains of a drake.

MRS. DELANE. The lecturer, is it?

SERGEANT. To be sure. What else would I be talking of? The lecturer has failed me, and where am I to go looking for a person that I would think fitting to take his place?

MRS. DELANE. And that's all? And you didn't get any message but the one?

SERGEANT. Is that all? I am surprised at you, Mrs. Delane. Isn't it enough to upset a man, within three quarters of an hour of the time of the meeting? Where, I would ask you, am I to find a man that has education enough and wit enough and character enough to put up speaking on the platform on the minute?

MR. QUIRKE (*jumps up*). It is I myself will tell you that.

SERGEANT. You!

MR. QUIRKE (*slapping* HALVEY *on the back*). Look at here, Sergeant. There is not one word was said in all those papers about this young man before you but it is true. And there could be no good thing said of him that would be too good for him.

SERGEANT. It might not be a bad idea.

MR. QUIRKE. Whatever the paper said about him, Sergeant, I can say more again. It has come to my knowledge—by chance—that since he came to this town that young man has saved a whole family from destruction.

SERGEANT. That is much to his credit—helping the rural classes——

MR. QUIRKE. A family and a long family, big and little, like sods of turf—and they depending on a—on one that might be on his way to dark trouble at this minute if it was not for his assistance. Believe me, he is the most sensible man, and the wittiest, and the kindest, and the best helper of the poor that ever stood before you in this square. Is not that so, Mrs. Delane?

MRS. DELANE. It is true indeed. Where he gets his wisdom and his wit and his information from I don't know, unless it might be that he is gifted from above.

SERGEANT. Well, Mrs. Delane, I think we have settled that question. Mr. Halvey, you will be the speaker at the meeting. The lecturer sent these notes—you can lengthen them into a speech. You can call to the people of Cloon to stand out, to begin the building of their character. I saw a lecturer do it one time at Dundrum. "Come up here," he said, "Dare to be a Daniel," he said——

HYACINTH. I can't—I won't——

SERGEANT (*looking at papers and thrusting them into his hand*). You will find it quite easy. I will conduct you to the platform—these papers before you and a glass of water—That's settled. (*Turns to go.*) Follow me on to the Courthouse in half an hour—I must go to the barracks first—I heard there was a telegram—— (*Calls back as he goes*) Don't be late, Mrs. Delane. Mind, Quirke, you promised to come.

MRS. DELANE. Well, it's time for me to make an end of settling myself—and indeed, Mr. Quirke, you'd best do the same.

MR. QUIRKE (*rubbing his cheek*). I suppose so. I had best keep on good terms with him for the present. (*Turns.*) Well, now, I had a great escape this day.

(*Both go in as* FARDY *reappears whistling.*)

HYACINTH (*sitting down*). I don't know in the world what has come upon the world that the half of the people of it should be cracked!

FARDY. Weren't you found out yet?

HYACINTH. Found out, is it? I don't know what you mean by being found out.

FARDY. Didn't he miss the sheep?

HYACINTH. He did, and I told him it was I took it—and what happened I declare to goodness I don't know—— Will you look at these? (*Holds out notes.*)

FARDY. Papers! Are they more testimonials?

HYACINTH. They are what is worse. (*Gives a hoarse laugh.*) Will you come and see me on the platform—these in my hand—and I speaking—giving out advice. (FARDY *whistles.*) Why didn't you tell me, the time you advised me to steal a sheep, that in this town it would qualify a man to go preaching, and the priest in the chair looking on.

FARDY. The time I took a few apples that had fallen off a stall, they did not ask me to hold a meeting. They welted me well.

HYACINTH (*looking round*). I would take apples if I could see them. I wish I had broke my neck before I left Carrow and I'd be

better off! I wish I had got six months the time I was caught setting snares—I wish I had robbed a church.

FARDY. Would a Protestant church do?

HYACINTH. I suppose it wouldn't be so great a sin.

FARDY. It's likely the Sergeant would think worse of it—Anyway, if you want to rob one, it's the Protestant church is the handiest.

HYACINTH (*getting up*). Show me what way to do it?

FARDY (*pointing*). I was going around it a few minutes ago, to see might there be e'er a dog scenting the sheep, and I noticed the window being out.

HYACINTH. Out, out and out?

FARDY. It was, where they are putting coloured glass in it for the distiller——

HYACINTH. What good does that do me?

FARDY. Every good. You could go in by that window if you had some person to give you a hoist. Whatever riches there is to get in it then, you'll get them.

HYACINTH. I don't want riches. I'll give you all I will find if you come and hoist me.

FARDY. Here is Miss Joyce coming to bring you to your lodging. Sure I brought your bag to it, the time you were away with the sheep——

HYACINTH. Run! Run!

(*They go off. Enter* MISS JOYCE.)

MISS JOYCE. Are you here, Mrs. Delane? Where, can you tell me, is Mr. Halvey?

MRS. DELANE (*coming out dressed*). It's likely he is gone on to the Courthouse. Did you hear he is to be in the chair and to make an address to the meeting?

MISS JOYCE. He is getting on fast. His Reverence says he will be a good help in the parish. Who would think, now, there would be such a godly young man in a little place like Carrow!

(*Enter* SERGEANT *in a hurry, with telegram.*)

SERGEANT. What time did this telegram arrive, Mrs. Delane?

MRS. DELANE. I couldn't be rightly sure, Sergeant. But sure it's marked on it, unless the clock I have is gone wrong.

SERGEANT. It is marked on it. And I have the time I got it marked on my own watch.

MRS. DELANE. Well, now, I wonder none of the police would have followed you with it from the barracks—and they with so little to do——

SERGEANT (*looking in at Quirke's shop*). Well, I am sorry to do what I have to do, but duty is duty.

(*He ransacks shop.* MRS. DELANE *looks on.* MR. QUIRKE *puts his head out of window.*)

MR. QUIRKE. What is that going on inside? (*No answer.*) Is there any one inside, I ask. (*No answer.*) It must be that dog of Tannian's —wait till I get at him.

MRS. DELANE. It is Sergeant Carden, Mr. Quirke. He would seem to be looking for something——

(MR. QUIRKE *appears in shop.* SERGEANT *comes out, makes another dive, taking up sacks, etc.*)

MR. QUIRKE. I'm greatly afraid I am just out of meat, Sergeant —and I'm sorry now to disoblige you, and you not being in the habit of dealing with me——

SERGEANT. I should think not, indeed.

MR. QUIRKE. Looking for a tender little bit of lamb, I suppose you are, for Mrs. Carden and the youngsters?

SERGEANT. I am not.

MR. QUIRKE. If I had it now, I'd be proud to offer it to you, and make no charge. I'll be killing a good kid to-morrow. Mrs. Carden might fancy a bit of it——

SERGEANT. I have had orders to search your establishment for unwholesome meat, and I am come here to do it.

MR. QUIRKE (*sitting down with a smile*). Is that so? Well, isn't it a wonder the schemers does be in the world.

SERGEANT. It is not the first time there have been complaints.

MR. QUIRKE. I suppose not. Well, it is on their own head it will fall at the last!

SERGEANT. I have found nothing so far.

MR. QUIRKE. I suppose not, indeed. What is there you could find, and it not in it?

SERGEANT. Have you no meat at all upon the premises?

MR. QUIRKE. I have, indeed, a nice barrel of bacon.

SERGEANT. What way did it die?

MR. QUIRKE. It would be hard for me to say that. American it is. How would I know what way they do be killing the pigs out there? Machinery, I suppose, they have—steam hammers——

SERGEANT. Is there nothing else here at all?

MR. QUIRKE. I give you my word, there is no meat living or dead in this place, but yourself and myself and that bird above in the cage.

SERGEANT. Well, I must tell the Inspector I could find nothing. But mind yourself for the future.

MR. QUIRKE. Thank you, Sergeant. I will do that. (*Enter* FARDY. *He stops short.*)

SERGEANT. It was you delayed that message to me, I suppose? You'd best mend your ways or I'll have something to say to you. (*Seizes and shakes him.*)

FARDY. That's the way everyone does be faulting me. (*Whimpers.*)

(*The* SERGEANT *gives him another shake. A half-crown falls out of his pocket.*)

MISS JOYCE (*picking it up*). A half-a-crown! Where, now, did you get that much, Fardy?

FARDY. Where did I get it, is it!

MISS JOYCE. I'll engage it was in no honest way you got it.

FARDY. I picked it up in the street——

MISS JOYCE. If you did, why didn't you bring it to the Sergeant or to his Reverence?

MRS. DELANE. And some poor person, may be, being at the loss of it.

MISS JOYCE. I'd best bring it to his Reverence. Come with me, Fardy, till he will question you about it.

FARDY. It was not altogether in the street I found it——

MISS JOYCE. There, now! I knew you got it in no good way! Tell me, now.

FARDY. It was playing pitch and toss I won it——

MISS JOYCE. And who would play for half-crowns with the like of you, Fardy Farrell? Who was it, now?

FARDY. It was—a stranger——

MISS JOYCE. Do you hear that? A stranger! Did you see e'er a stranger in this town, Mrs. Delane, or Sergeant Carden, or Mr. Quirke?

MR. QUIRKE. Not a one.

SERGEANT. There was no stranger here.

MRS. DELANE. There could not be one here without me knowing it.

FARDY. I tell you there was.

MISS JOYCE. Come on, then, and tell who was he to his Reverence.

SERGEANT (*taking other arm*). Or to the bench.

FARDY. I did get it, I tell you, from a stranger.

SERGEANT. Where is he, so?

FARDY. He's in some place—not far away.

SERGEANT. Bring me to him.

FARDY. He'll be coming here.

SERGEANT. Tell me the truth and it will be better for you.

FARDY (*weeping*). Let me go and I will.

SERGEANT (*letting go*). Now—who did you get it from?

FARDY. From that young chap came to-day, Mr. Halvey.

ALL. Mr. Halvey!

MR. QUIRKE (*indignantly*). What are you saying, you young ruffian you? Hyacinth Halvey to be playing pitch and toss with the like of you!

FARDY. I didn't say that.

MISS JOYCE. You did say it. You said it now.

MR. QUIRKE. Hyacinth Halvey! The best man that ever came into this town!

MISS JOYCE. It's my belief the half-crown is a bad one. May be it's to pass it off it was given to him. There were tinkers in the town at the time of the fair. Give it here to me. (*Bites it.*) No, indeed, it's sound enough. Here, Sergeant, it's best for you take it.

(*Gives it to* SERGEANT, *who examines it.*)

SERGEANT. Can it be? Can it be what I think it to be?

MR. QUIRKE. What is it? What do you take it to be?

SERGEANT. It is, it is. I know it. I know this half-crown——

MR. QUIRKE. That is a queer thing, now.

SERGEANT. I know it well. I have been handling it in the church for the last twelvemonth——

MR. QUIRKE. Is that so?

SERGEANT. It is the nest-egg half-crown we hand round in the collection plate every Sunday morning. I know it by the dint on the Queen's temples and the crooked scratch under her nose.

MR. QUIRKE (*examining it*). So there is, too.

SERGEANT. This is a bad business. It has been stolen from the church.

ALL. O! O! O!

SERGEANT (*seizing* FARDY). You have robbed the church!

FARDY (*terrified*). I tell you I never did!

SERGEANT. I have the proof of it.

FARDY. Say what you like! I never put a foot in it!

SERGEANT. How did you get this, so?

MISS JOYCE. I suppose from the *stranger*?

MRS. DELANE. I suppose it was Hyacinth Halvey gave it to you, now.

FARDY. It was so.

SERGEANT. I suppose it was he robbed the church?

FARDY (*sobs*). You will not believe me if I say it.

MR. QUIRKE. O! the young vagabond! Let me get at him!

MRS. DELANE. Here he is himself now!

(HYACINTH *comes in.* FARDY *releases himself and creeps behind him.*)

MRS. DELANE. It is time you to come, Mr. Halvey, and shut the mouth of this young schemer.

MISS JOYCE. I would like you to hear what he says of you, Mr. Halvey. Pitch and toss, he says.

MR. QUIRKE. Robbery, he says.

MRS. DELANE. Robbery of a church.

SERGEANT. He has had a bad name long enough. Let him go to a reformatory now.

FARDY (*clinging to* HYACINTH). Save me, save me! I'm a poor boy trying to knock out a way of living; I'll be destroyed if I go to a reformatory. (*Kneels and clings to* HYACINTH'S *knees.*)

HYACINTH. I'll save you easy enough.

FARDY. Don't let me be gaoled!

HYACINTH. I am going to tell them.

FARDY. I'm a poor orphan——

HYACINTH. Will you let me speak?

FARDY. I'll get no more chance in the world——

HYACINTH. Sure I'm trying to free you——

FARDY. It will be tasked to me always.

HYACINTH. Be quiet, can't you.

FARDY. Don't you desert me!

HYACINTH. Will you be silent?

FARDY. Take it on yourself.

HYACINTH. I will if you'll let me.

FARDY. Tell them you did it.

HYACINTH. I am going to do that.

FARDY. Tell them it was you got in at the window.

HYACINTH. I will! I will!

FARDY. Say it was you robbed the box.

HYACINTH. I'll say it! I'll say it!

FARDY. It being open!

HYACINTH. Let me tell, let me tell.

FARDY. Of all that was in it.

HYACINTH. I'll tell them that.

FARDY. And gave it to me.

HYACINTH (*putting hand on his mouth and dragging him up*). Will you stop and let me speak?

SERGEANT. We can't be wasting time. Give him here to me.

HYACINTH. I can't do that. He must be let alone.

SERGEANT (*seizing him*). He'll be let alone in the lock-up.

HYACINTH. He must not be brought there.

SERGEANT. I'll let no man get him off.

HYACINTH. I will get him off.

SERGEANT. You will not!

HYACINTH. I will.

SERGEANT. Do you think to buy him off?

HYACINTH. I will buy him off with my own confession.

SERGEANT. And what will that be?

HYACINTH. It was I robbed the church.

SERGEANT. That is likely indeed!

HYACINTH. Let him go, and take me. I tell you I did it.

SERGEANT. It would take witnesses to prove that.

HYACINTH (*pointing to* FARDY). He will be witness.

FARDY. O! Mr. Halvey, I would not wish to do that. Get me off and I will say nothing.

HYACINTH. Sure you must. You will be put on oath in the court.

FARDY. I will not! I will not! All the world knows I don't understand the nature of an oath!

MR. QUIRKE (*coming forward*). Is it blind ye all are?

MRS. DELANE. What are you talking about?

MR. QUIRKE. Is it fools ye all are?

MISS JOYCE. Speak for yourself.

MR. QUIRKE. Is it idiots ye all are?

SERGEANT. Mind who you're talking to.

MR. QUIRKE (*seizing* HYACINTH'S *hands*). Can't you see? Can't you hear? Where are your wits? Was ever such a thing seen in this town?

MRS. DELANE. Say out what you have to say.

MR. QUIRKE. A walking saint he is!

MRS. DELANE. Maybe so.

MR. QUIRKE. The preserver of the poor! Talk of the holy martyrs! They are nothing at all to what he is! Will you look at him! To save that poor boy he is going! To take the blame on himself he is going! To say he himself did the robbery he is going! Before the magistrate he is going! To gaol he is going! Taking the blame on his own head! Putting the sin on his own shoulders! Letting on to have done a robbery! Telling a lie—that it may be

forgiven him—to his own injury! Doing all that I tell you to save the character of a miserable slack lad, that rose in poverty.

(*Murmur of admiration from* ALL.)

MR. QUIRKE. Now, what do you say?

SERGEANT (*pressing his hand*). Mr. Halvey, you have given us all a lesson. To please you, I will make no information against the boy. (*Shakes him and helps him up.*) I will put back the half-crown in the poor-box next Sunday. (*To* FARDY) What have you to say to your benefactor?

FARDY. I'm obliged to you, Mr. Halvey. You behaved very decent indeed. I'll never let a word be said against you if I live to be a hundred years.

SERGEANT (*wiping eyes with a blue handkerchief*). I will tell it at the meeting. It will be a great encouragement to them to build up their character. I'll tell it to the priest and he taking the chair——

HYACINTH. O stop, will you——

MR. QUIRKE. The chair. It's in the chair he himself should be. It's in a chair we will put him now. It's to chair him through the streets we will. Sure he'll be an example and a blessing to the whole of the town. (*Seizes* HALVEY *and seats him in chair.*) Now, Sergeant, give a hand. Here, Fardy.

(*They all lift the chair with* HALVEY *in it, wildly protesting.*)

MR. QUIRKE. Come along now to the Courthouse. Three cheers for Hyacinth Halvey! Hip! hip! hoora!

(*Cheers heard in the distance as the curtain drops.*)

Curtain.

THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

AFTER

JEAN BAPTISTE MOLIÈRE

PERSONS

SGANARELLE. *A Woodcutter.*
MARTHA. *His Wife.*
ROBERT. *His Neighbour.*
VALERE. *Servant of Geronte.*
LUCAS. *The same.*
GERONTE. *Father of Lucy.*
JACQUELINE. *Nurse at Geronte's, and Wife of Lucas.*
LUCY. *Daughter of Geronte.*
LEANDRE. *In Love with Lucy.*

ACT I

SCENE: *A cottage.* SGANARELLE *and* MARTHA *come in quarrelling.*

SGANARELLE. I tell you I will not do it or any other thing. It is I myself will give out orders, I tell you, and will have the upper hand.

MARTHA. And I tell you it is I myself will be uppermost! I made no promise the day I married you to put up with your pranks and your tricks.

SGANARELLE. Well now, isn't a wife the great torment! Aristotle was surely right the time he said a woman to be worse in the house than the devil!

MARTHA. Will you look now at this great scholar with his fool talk of an Aristotle!

SGANARELLE. So I am, too, a great scholar. Where now would you find any other cutter of scollops that has as much knowledge as myself? I that served a high-up doctor through the length of six years, and that knew the rudiments and I a young boy.

MARTHA. Bad 'cess to you. Sure you havn't the sense of an ass!

SGANARELLE. Bad 'cess to yourself!

MARTHA. It was a bad day and hour for me that brought me into your house!

SGANARELLE. A bad end indeed to them that made the match!

MARTHA. You look well making that complaint! It is thanking

God every minute of your life you should be for getting the like of myself for a wife. It is little you deserved it!

SGANARELLE. Oh, to be sure, I didn't deserve such a great honour at all! I have my own story to tell of the way you behaved from then until now! Believe me, it was well for you to get me.

MARTHA. Well for me to get you, is it? A man that is bringing me to the poorhouse. A schemer, a traitor, that is eating up all I have!

SGANARELLE. That is a lie you are telling. I drink some of it.

MARTHA. Selling, bit by bit, everything that is in the house.

SGANARELLE. Sure that is living on one's property.

MARTHA. That has taken my bed from under me!

SGANARELLE. You will get up the earlier.

MARTHA. That has made away with the furniture——

SGANARELLE. We have the more room in the house.

MARTHA. That is drinking and card playing night and morning——

SGANARELLE. To keep myself from fretting.

MARTHA. And what now would you have me do with the children?

SGANARELLE. Please yourself in that.

MARTHA. The weight of four little one-eens on my shoulders!

SGANARELLE. Leave them down on the floor!

MARTHA. And they crying to me for food——

SGANARELLE. Give them a taste of the stick!

MARTHA. Is it this way you will be going on for ever, you sot?

SGANARELLE. Be easy now, if you please.

MARTHA. Am I to put up with your abuse and your scattering?

SGANARELLE. Don't now be letting us get into a passion!

MARTHA. What way at all can I make you behave yourself?

SGANARELLE. Mind what you say! If my temper is not good my arm is good!

MARTHA. I am not in dread of your threats.

SGANARELLE. Oh, my sky-woman, you are wanting to coax something out of me!

MARTHA. Do you think I give heed to what you're saying?

SGANARELLE. My Helen, my Venus, I'll pull your ears for you.

MARTHA. You drunken vagabond!

SGANARELLE. I'll give you a welting.

MARTHA. You sneaking tippler!

SGANARELLE. A good thrashing——

MARTHA. You ruffian you!

SGANARELLE. Let me at you!

MARTHA. You good for nothing villain! You traitor, you thief, you coward, you scoundrel, you rascal, you cheat, you whelp, you informer, you backbiter, you rogue of ill-luck!

SGANARELLE (*taking up a stick and beating her*). If you have your mind set on it, here it is for you!

MARTHA. Oh, oh, oh, oh!

(ROBERT, *a man of the neighbours, comes in.*)

ROBERT. Hallo, hallo, hallo! What is this? For shame, for shame. Misfortune on the man that is mistreating his wife!

MARTHA (*flies at* ROBERT, *drives him round the stage and at last gives him a box on the ear*). I say he is welcome to beat me!

ROBERT. Let him do it so, and I'm satisfied.

MARTHA. What call have you to come meddling here?

ROBERT. I wish I didn't come.

MARTHA. What business is it of yours?

ROBERT. None at all.

MARTHA. Look at him now, the impudent meddler, trying to hinder a husband from beating his own wife!

ROBERT. I'll hinder him no more.

MARTHA. What have you to say now?

ROBERT. Nothing at all.

MARTHA. Why would you be thrusting in your face?

ROBERT. You may say so.

MARTHA. Mind your own business.

ROBERT. I'll say no more.

MARTHA. It's my own wish to be beaten.

ROBERT. I'm not against it.

MARTHA. It is not you will pay for it.

ROBERT. That is so.

MARTHA. It is a fool that comes meddling where he is not wanted.

ROBERT (*to* SGANARELLE). I ask your pardon, neighbour, for interfering. Go on, thrash your wife. If you wish it I will give you a hand.

SGANARELLE. I don't want your help.

ROBERT. All right so.

SGANARELLE. I'll beat her when I have a mind, and when I have a mind I'll let her alone.

ROBERT. Very well, very well.

SGANARELLE. She is my wife and not yours.

ROBERT. That's the truth.

SGANARELLE. It's not for you to be giving me orders.

ROBERT. I suppose not.

SGANARELLE. I can do without your help.

ROBERT. I'm satisfied so.

SGANARELLE. What impudence you have with your interfering! It is what Cicero says: "Do not thrust in your finger between the tree and the bark." (*He attacks* ROBERT *with his stick and drives him out.*) (*To* MARTHA.) Here now, we'll make it up.

MARTHA. I will not make it up after the way you treated me.

SGANARELLE. That's nothing at all. Come here now.

MARTHA. I will not.

SGANARELLE. Aye?

MARTHA. I won't.

SGANARELLE. Come on now, there's the good woman.

MARTHA. I tell you I will not.

SGANARELLE. Do now as I ask you.

MARTHA. I will not.

SGANARELLE. Come on now, come.

MARTHA. I am rightly vexed this time.

SGANARELLE. Sure it was nothing at all.

MARTHA. Let me alone.

SGANARELLE. Give me the hand now.

MARTHA. I will not after the way you treated me.

SGANARELLE. Well, sure I ask your pardon. Give me the hand.

MARTHA. Well, I forgive. (*Aside.*) But I'll make you pay for it!

SGANARELLE. You would be foolish now to be giving heed to a thing of the sort. Sure there are no friends but have a falling out some time. There is nothing can serve friendship like a few blows of a stick. Well, I'll be going to the wood. Wait till you see all the scollops I will cut on this day. (*He goes out.*)

MARTHA (*alone*). My joy go with you! It is long before I'll forget to you the way you are after beating me, although I may let on to forget it. It is no common punishment I will be satisfied to put on him this time, but a punishment he will remember the longest day he lives.

(*Enter* VALERE *and* LUCAS.)

LUCAS (*to* VALERE, *without seeing* MARTHA). In my opinion it is a queer sort of a search we are sent on, and it is little profit we are likely to get of it.

VALERE. What can we do? Sure we must obey our master. And if that wasn't so itself, we must be sorry to see the poor young lady the way she is—— for till she gets well there can be no wedding, and that wedding should bring in something to ourselves. It is likely

Horace will be the husband, and he is known to be a generous man. There are some say she had her mind set on one Leandre, but the master never would be willing to take *him* for a son-in-law.

MARTHA. Whatever happens I will pay him out. Those blows are sticking in me, I feel them yet. (*Stumbling against* VALERE *and* LUCAS.) I ask your pardon, gentlemen. I did not take notice of you. I had my mind taken up with something that was annoying me.

VALERE. There is no one but has trouble in this world. We ourselves are going about looking for a thing we would be glad to meet with.

MARTHA. Maybe it is something I could help you to find?

VALERE. Maybe so. It is what we are in search of, some good doctor, some skilful man, that might give relief to our master's daughter that has lost the talk with some sickness that has come upon her. Doctors and doctors she has had, but they could do nothing at all for her. Now there are men to be found sometimes that can do great cures with some secret remedy of their own. That is the sort of a man we are seeking out.

MARTHA (*to herself*). The Lord has sent me a way to get my revenge on that rascal of mine! (*To them.*) You could never have found anyone better than myself to put you into the way of getting the thing you want. There is a doctor in this place is the best hand in the world at curing the worst of diseases.

VALERE. Is that so? But where can we find him?

MARTHA. You will find him in that little wood there beyond, amusing himself. He is cutting scollops.

LUCAS. A doctor to be cutting scollops?

VALERE. I suppose you mean he is gathering herbs.

MARTHA. Not at all. He is a queer sort of a man, he takes his amusement that way. Full of cranks and fancies he is——you would never take him to be a doctor at all, by his dress or by his ways. Sometimes he will let on to be ignorant, the way you would think he was in dread to use his gift and his knowledge, and they so great as they are.

VALERE. It is a strange thing indeed the way the greatest of men will have some grain of folly mixed up with all their learning.

MARTHA. You never met so contrary a man as this one. It sometimes happens he will let himself be beaten before he will own to being a doctor at all. It is likely you will have to take a stick to him before he will own to it. That is what we ourselves are used to do when we have occasion for him.

VALERE. That is great foolishness in him indeed.

MARTHA. If it is, it's true. But when you have him well beaten he will do wonders.

VALERE. What now is his name?

MARTHA. Sganarelle his name is. You will know him easy enough, a black beard he has, and a frilled collar and a green and yellow coat.

LUCAS. A green and yellow coat! It is a parrot doctor he has a right to be.

VALERE. But tell me now, is it surely true he is as clever as what you say.

MARTHA. I tell you he is a man that does wonders. It is not six months since there was a woman that was given over by all the other doctors. Dead they thought her to be through the length of six hours. Stretched out for her burying she was. Well this doctor we are speaking of was brought in, and when he saw her he put a little drop out of a bottle into her mouth, and she rose up from her bed on the moment and went about the room as if nothing had happened.

LUCAS. Do you tell me so!

VALERE. That drop he gave her was surely worth gold.

MARTHA. About three weeks ago there was a little lad fell down from the top of a tower. All broken and destroyed he was, his head and his arms and his legs. They brought this man we are speaking of to him then, and he rubbed the whole of his body with an ointment he has the secret of, and with that the little lad stood up on his two feet, and away with him to play pitch and toss.

LUCAS. Is that a fact now?

VALERE. This man must have a cure for everything.

MARTHA. So he has, too.

LUCAS. That is the sort of a man we are in search of. Let us go now and find him.

VALERE. We are thankful to you, ma'am, for what you have done for us.

MARTHA. Don't forget now the advice I gave you.

LUCAS. We will not. If it is but a few blows of a stick he is wanting, we are sure of him.

VALERE (*to* LUCAS). We had great luck in meeting with this woman. I have good hopes now our journey will not go for nothing.

SCENE II: *A Wood.* VALERE *and* LUCAS. SGANARELLE *heard singing.*

VALERE. I hear some person singing——and cutting wood.

SGANARELLE (*comes in without seeing them. Has a bottle in his hand*). La————la————la————Faith I have worked hard enough. It is well I have earned a drop. (*Drinks.*) It is very dry work to be cutting timber. (*Sings.*)

O little bottle of my heart,
Apple of every eye!
All the world would envy me
If you were never dry!
There's many a lad and lass is dead,
I'll cry them bye and bye.
Its little I need think of them
Until the bottle's dry!

Well there's no use in fretting.

VALERE. That is the man himself.

LUCAS. It is likely it is. We had luck to chance upon him.

VALERE. Wait till we take a nearer view of him.

SGANARELLE (*hugs his bottle, then seeing them watching him, lowers his voice*). Ah! my little rogue of a comrade, it is yourself is my treasure!

All the world would envy me
If you were never dry!

(*Seeing them look closer at him.*) What the mischief are these wanting?

VALERE. It is himself surely.

LUCAS. He answers to what she told us, anyway.

(SGANARELLE *puts down bottle on the ground.* VALERE *bows to salute him, and he thinking it is with a design to take it away puts it on the other side.* LUCAS *also bowing,* SGANARELLE *takes it up again and holds it close to his body, which makes "un jeu de theatre."*

SGANARELLE. They are whispering with one another, they are looking very hard at myself. What plan are they making up, I wonder?

VALERE. Is it you now, sir, that is called Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE. Aye? What's that?

VALERE. I am asking is your name Sganarelle.

SGANARELLE (*turning towards* VALERE, *then towards* LUCAS). It is and it is not, according to what you want with him.

VALERE. All we want is to show him all the civility we can.

SGANARELLE. If that is so, my name is Sganarelle.

VALERE. It is well pleased we are to see you, sir. We were sent looking for you to ask your help about a thing we are in need of.

SGANARELLE. If it is anything that belongs to my little business I will give it, and welcome.

VALERE. You are too good to us, indeed. Put on your hat if you please. The sun might be too strong for you.

LUCAS. Do so, sir, cover your head.

SGANARELLE (*aside*). What great manners they have!

VALERE. Do not be wondering now we two have come to you. People that are gifted are always in demand, and we heard a great account of you.

SGANARELLE. So you might too. I am the best man in the world at cutting scollops.

VALERE. Ah now, sir!

SGANARELLE. I don't spare myself at all. Cutting and sorting them, the way no one can find any fault.

VALERE. That is not what we are talking about.

SGANARELLE. But I sell them at no less than fivepence the hundred.

VALERE. Don't be talking of that now, if you please.

SGANARELLE. I tell you I cannot give them for less.

VALERE. We know all about that, sir.

SGANARELLE. Then if you know all about it you know I get that much for them.

VALERE. It is joking you are, sir——but——

SGANARELLE. It is not joking I am, I will take no less.

VALERE. Leave talking this way now if you please.

SGANARELLE. You might get them cheaper from some other one. There are scollops and scollops, but for those that I cut——

VALERE. Let us leave talking of scollops.

SGANARELLE. I give you my word you won't get them for one farthing under what I say.

VALERE. Be ashamed now.

SGANARELLE. Upon my word you will pay that much. It is the truth I am speaking. I am not one to be asking what is not fair.

VALERE. Look now, sir, is it right for a man like yourself to be playing tricks and to be letting himself down with this sort of talk. Is it right for a man of learning and a great doctor like yourself to be hiding himself away from the world with all his skill and his knowledge.

SGANARELLE (*aside*). The man is surely cracked.

VALERE. Don't be humbugging us now, if you please.

SGANARELLE. What are you talking about?

VALERE. All this is but letting on. I know more than what you think.

SGANARELLE. What is it you know? Who is it you are taking me for?

VALERE. For what you are, and that is a great doctor.

SGANARELLE. Doctor yourself! I am not one, and I never was one.

VALERE (*aside*). This is the foolishness he puts on. (*To him.*) Do not be denying the truth, sir, it would be a pity were we to be forced to do a thing which would be displeasing to you.

SGANARELLE. What thing is that?

VALERE. A thing we would be sorry to do.

SGANARELLE. What do I care what you may do? I am no doctor, and I don't understand what you are saying.

VALERE (*aside*). We must try the cure on him. (*To him.*) Look-at here, sir, I will give you another chance to own to be what you are.

LUCAS. Do not be humbugging any more, but confess straight and fair that you are a doctor.

SGANARELLE. I am getting vexed.

VALERE. Where is the use of hiding what we know?

LUCAS. Why would you be making pretences? What good will it do you?

SGANARELLE. Look here now, one word is as good as ten thousand. I tell you I am no doctor.

VALERE. You are no doctor?

SGANARELLE. I am not.

LUCAS. You are not you say?

SGANARELLE. No, I tell you.

VALERE. Since you will have it, we must do as we can.

(*Each takes a big stick and they beat him.*)

SGANARELLE. Ah, ah, ah! I am anything you like!

VALERE. Why did you force us to this, sir?

LUCAS. Why did you give us the trouble of beating you?

VALERE. Believe me, I was loth to do it.

LUCAS. Faith I was sorry myself, and very sorry.

SGANARELLE. What the devil are you saying? Is it joking you are, or is it mad you both are, that you will have me to be a doctor?

VALERE. Will you not give in yet? Are you denying yet that you are a doctor?

SGANARELLE. May the devil take me if I am.

LUCAS. It is not true so that you understand physic?

SGANARELLE. That I may die if I do! (*They begin to beat him.*) Stop, stop! O yes, if you will have it so I am a doctor, a doctor I say, and an apothecary if you wish it along with that. I would sooner agree to anything than be clouted on the head.

VALERE. That is right now. I am well pleased to see you listen to reason.

LUCAS. I am well satisfied now when you talk like that.

VALERE. I ask your pardon from the bottom of my soul.

LUCAS. Will you forgive me, sir, for making so free?

SGANARELLE (*aside*). Is it true it is? Was I deceiving myself? Was I turned into a doctor and never knowing it till now?

VALERE. Believe me you will never repent of confessing to the truth. You will be well satisfied that you did it.

SGANARELLE. But tell me now, isn't it you yourselves might be under a mistake? Is it quite sure I am doctor?

LUCAS. Sure and certain.

SGANARELLE. Is that so?

VALERE. No doubt at all of it.

SGANARELLE. And I without knowing it!

VALERE. What are you talking about? You are the greatest doctor in the world.

SGANARELLE. Am I, indeed?

LUCAS. A doctor that has cured a great deal of sick people.

SGANARELLE. The Lord save us!

VALERE. A woman was thought to be dead for six hours. They were ready to bury her, when with one drop of a cure you brought her to life again and set her walking about the room.

SGANARELLE. The deuce I did!

LUCAS. A little lad of twelve years that fell from the top of a tower you cured. With an ointment you did it, putting it on his head and his legs and his arms that were broken, till he rose up on his feet and went playing pitch and toss.

SGANARELLE. I did that too!

VALERE. So you may as well be content to go with us. You will get great gains if you will come where we will bring you.

SGANARELLE. Great gains is it?

VALERE. That is what I said.

SGANARELLE. Then I am a doctor and no mistake. I had forgotten it for a while, but I remember it now. What is the matter? Where must I go?

VALERE. We will bring you there. You have to see a young lady that has lost her talk.

SGANARELLE. Faith I have not found it!

VALERE (*aside*). He likes to be funning. Come on now, sir.

SGANARELLE. Without a doctor's suit?

VALERE. We will get you one.

SGANARELLE (*offering his bottle to* VALERE). You may carry that. It is in that bottle I keep my physic. Now, march, walk on, by the doctor's orders!

LUCAS. A very pleasant man. It is my opinion he will do the job.

Curtain.

ACT II

SCENE I: *A Room in* GERONTE'S *House.* GERONTE, VALERE, LUCAS.

VALERE. Believe me, sir, you will be satisfied and well satisfied. The doctor we have brought you is the best on the whole ridge of the world.

LUCAS. You may say that! All the rest put together are not fit to clean his boots for him.

VALERE. A man he is that has done wonderful cures.

LUCAS. He has brought back to life some that were dead.

VALERE. Some queer ways he has, as I was telling you. There are times when his wits would seem to be gone from him, the way you would never believe him to be the thing that he is.

LUCAS. Playing he does be at foolishness, that anyone nearly would take him to be cracked.

VALERE. And he having great knowledge all the time. Very high talk he does be giving out now and again.

LUCAS. So he does too, for all the world as if he was saying it out of a book.

VALERE. He has a great name in every place. There are people coming to him from far and near.

GERONTE. I am longing to see him. Bring him here at once.

VALERE. I will go call him.

(*Enter* JACQUELINE.)

JACQUELINE. It is my belief, sir, this doctor will do no more than the rest of them, no worse and no better. In my opinion the best doctor you can give Miss Lucy is a good handsome husband that is to her liking.

GERONTE. Be quiet, nurse. You are too fond of meddling.

LUCAS. Hold your tongue now, wife Jacqueline. Let you not come pushing yourself here.

JACQUELINE. I tell you, Lucas, and I tell the two of you, that all these doctors will do her no more good than a drink of water. It is something more than rhubarb and senna the child wants. Believe me, a good husband is the best cure for any young girl.

GERONTE. Who would take charge of her in the state she is in now? And when I wanted her to marry she would not listen to me.

JACQUELINE. That is so. But you were wanting her to marry a man she had no liking for. Why didn't you let her marry that young Mr. Leandre that she had her heart fixed on? I'll engage she'd have obeyed you that time quick enough. I'll tell you more again, she would take him now if she did but get the chance.

GERONTE. Leandre is no match for her. He is not well off like the other.

JACQUELINE. He has an uncle that is well off. It is he will be the heir.

GERONTE. These tales of riches to come are all on the breeze. Those who are waiting for a funeral feast may have plenty of time to go hungry.

JACQUELINE. It is what I often heard said, that in marriage, as in many another thing, contentment is better than riches. Fathers and mothers have a bad habit, asking always "How much has he got?" "How much has she got?" Look at the way old Peter went marrying his daughter to that Thomas, just because he had a couple of acres more of a garden than the boy she had set her mind on; and the poor thing is not the better of it now, but is turned as yellow as yellow. What do you say to that, sir? Everyone must have their own pleasure at one time or another. I'd sooner give a girl her choice man than all the money that is in the bank.

GERONTE. That will do, nurse, give your tongue a rest, or you will talk yourself into trouble.

LUCAS (*striking her on the shoulder at every sentence*). Come now——be easy——It is too free you are making with the master. Let you go rock the cradle, and let him take his own way. Sure the master will do what is best for her——isn't she his own? (*pushes her away.*)

GERONTE. Gently, gently.

LUCAS (*again striking her on the shoulder*). It is some sort of a lesson I must give her, sir. I must teach her the way to behave herself before you.

GERONTE. Yes, yes, but you need not go quite so far.

VALERE (*coming in*). Here he is coming, sir. Here is our doctor.

(*Enter* SGANARELLE.)

GERONTE. I am very happy, sir, to see you at my house. We were very much in need of you.

SGANARELLE. Hippocrates says: "Let us both be covered."

GERONTE. Does Hippocrates say that?

SGANARELLE. He does.

GERONTE. In what chapter may I ask?

SGANARELLE. In his chapter——upon hats.

GERONTE. Since Hippocrates says it, it must be done.

SGANARELLE. Well, doctor, having heard of the wonderful things——

GERONTE. To whom are you speaking if you please?

SGANARELLE. To yourself.

GERONTE. But I am not a doctor.

SGANARELLE. What is that? You are not a doctor?

GERONTE. No indeed.

SGANARELLE (*taking a stick and beating* GERONTE *as he had been beaten*). Do you mean that?

GERONTE. I do mean it. Ah, ah, ah!

SGANARELLE. You are a doctor now. That is all the licence I myself got.

GERONTE. What devil of a man have you brought me?

VALERE. I told you, sir, he was apt to be humbugging.

GERONTE. I will send him about his business with his humbugging!

LUCAS. O don't give heed to it, sir. It was only a sort of a joke.

GERONTE. I do not like this sort of joking.

SGANARELLE. I ask pardon, sir, for the liberty I have taken.

GERONTE. Do not mention it, sir.

SGANARELLE. I am sorry.

GERONTE. O, it is nothing at all.

SGANARELLE. For the blows——

GERONTE. There is no harm done.

SGANARELLE. That I have had the honour to give you.

GERONTE. You need not waste time talking of that. I have a daughter who is suffering from a very strange disease.

SGANARELLE. I am well pleased, sir, to think your daughter has occasion for me. Indeed I wish that you yourself and your whole family had occasion for me along with her, till I would show the desire I have to serve you.

GERONTE. I am much obliged for your good wishes.

SGANARELLE. Believe me, it is in earnest I am.

GERONTE. You do me too much honour.

SGANARELLE. What now is your daughter's name?

GERONTE. Lucy.

SGANARELLE. Lucy! That now is a very nice name for a patient to have.

GERONTE. I will go and see what she is doing.

SGANARELLE. Who is that fine young woman there?

GERONTE. She is nurse to a young child of mine. (*Goes out.*)

LUCAS. She is, and she is wife to myself.

SGANARELLE. Ah! that is a very nice looking woman now to have in the house (*takes her hand*). If there is anything at all I can do for you, tell me at any time and I will do it.

LUCAS. Now, doctor, if you please, leave talking to my wife.

SGANARELLE. Oh, she is your wife, is she?

LUCAS. She is so.

SGANARELLE. Well, I wish her joy of so good a man, and I wish yourself joy of so handsome a wife, so sensible, so well shaped——

LUCAS. That will do you, doctor. I have no great mind for those sort of compliments.

(GERONTE *brings in* LUCY.)

SGANARELLE. Is this the patient?

GERONTE. Here she is. I have no other daughter, doctor, and if anything should happen to her it would break my heart.

SGANARELLE. Nothing will happen her. She cannot die, you know, without a prescription from the doctor.

GERONTE. A chair here.

SGANARELLE (*sitting between* LUCY *and* GERONTE). Here is a patient that is no way disagreeable to be looking at. I think a man having good sense would be very well pleased with her.

GERONTE. You have made her laugh, sir.

SGANARELLE. That is right. When a doctor can make his patient laugh it is the best sign in the world. Now let us hear the case. What is it ails you? Have you a pain in any place?

LUCY (*putting her hands to her mouth, her head, and under her chin*). Han, hi, hon, han.

SGANARELLE. What is that?

LUCY (*with the same gestures*). Han, hi, hon, han, hi, hon.

SGANARELLE. What is it?

LUCY. Han, hi, hon.

SGANARELLE. Han, hi, hon, han, ha. I can't understand what you are saying. What sort of a language at all is this?

GERONTE. That is what is wrong with her. She has lost her speech, and we cannot tell why or wherefore. We have had to put off her marriage on account of it.

SGANARELLE. Why so?

GERONTE. The gentleman she is engaged to wants to see her cured before making his settlements.

SGANARELLE. What a fool he must be! I wish to God my wife had the same disease. It would be long before I would want to cure her.

GERONTE. And so, sir, we are looking to you to give her some relief.

SGANARELLE. O, you need not put yourself out about it. Tell me this now, does it lie very heavy on her?

GERONTE. It does indeed.

SGANARELLE. So much the better. Does she feel much pain?

GERONTE. A great deal.

SGANARELLE (*turning to patient*). Give me your wrist. Here now, this pulse tells me that your daughter is dumb.

GERONTE. Yes, but I would be glad if you would tell me how it came about.

SGANARELLE. Easy enough. It came about because she lost her speech.

GERONTE. Yes, yes, but how was it she lost her speech?

SGANARELLE. All our best writers will tell you that loss of speech comes from an impediment in the action of the tongue.

GERONTE. Yes, yes, but tell me your theory as to this impediment.

SGANARELLE. Aristotle says——some very fine things about it.

GERONTE. That is likely enough.

SGANARELLE. That now was a great man!

GERONTE. No doubt, no doubt.

SGANARELLE. A very great man (*holding up his arm from the elbow*). He was greater than myself by the length of that. Stop now till we go back to our discourse. It is what I hold to that this impediment to the action of the tongue is caused by certain humours that are called by scholars peccant humours—peccant you know ——peccant humours; the same as the clouds that are caused by

the exhalation of influences that rise up in the region of diseases ——coming as you may say to——I suppose you understand Latin?

GERONTE. Not a word.

SGANARELLE (*getting up, brusquely*). You don't know Latin!

GERONTE. Not a word.

SGANARELLE (*with enthusiasm*). Cabricias arci thuram, catalamus, singularite nominative, haec musa, the muse, bonus, bona, bonum. Deus sanctus, est-ne oratio latinas? Etiam, yes. Quare? Quia substantive adjectivum concordate in generi, numerum et casus.

GERONTE. O, why did I never study Latin!

JACQULINE. Well, now, hasn't he great learning!

LUCAS. So he has. It is that great I can't make head or tail of it.

SGANARELLE. These vapours now, as I was telling you, in passing from the left side where the liver is to the right side where the heart is, find that the lungs, that we call in Latin, *Armyan*, having communication with the brain, that we call in Greek, *Nasmus*, by means of the hollow vein that we call in Hebrew, *Cubile*, meets in its way the said vapours that fill the ventricles of the omoplate——and because the said vapours——listen well now till you understand this——have a certain malignity——pay attention now I tell you.

GERONTE. Yes, yes.

SGANARELLE. Have a certain malignity that is caused by the acrimony of the humours engendered by the concavity of the diaphragm, it happens that these vapours——ossabandus, niqueis, nequer potarinum, quipsa milus, that now is the very thing that has brought dumbness on your daughter.

JACQUELINE. Well that is great talk, and no mistake.

LUCAS. I wish I could twist my tongue the like of that.

GERONTE. No doubt about it, no one could have reasoned a thing out better. But there is just one thing that puzzled me——and that is the position of the liver and of the heart. It seems to me you put them out of their proper places. Is not the heart on the left side, and the liver on the right?

SGANARELLE. That is the way they used to be, but we have changed all that. We practise medicine in quite a different manner in these days.

GERONTE. That is what I did not know. You must forgive my ignorance.

SGANARELLE. To be sure, to be sure. You are not expected to be as learned as what we doctors are.

GERONTE. No, indeed. But tell me now, what should be done to cure her?

SGANARELLE. What do I think should be done?

GERONTE. Just so.

SGANARELLE. It is my opinion she should be sent to her bed, and the cure I would recommend her would be a good share of bread that has been soaked in wine.

GERONTE. What effect could that have on her?

SGANARELLE. Sure there is some virtue in bread and wine that acts upon the speech. Isn't it what they give to parrots, and don't they learn to speak?

GERONTE. That is true. What a clever man he is! Hurry, hurry, bring in plenty of bread and wine!

SGANARELLE. I will come back in the evening to see what way is she going on.

GERONTE. Stop, stop a moment!

SGANARELLE. What should I stop for?

GERONTE. Well, sir, I should like to offer you a fee.

SGANARELLE. I will not take it (*putting his hands behind his back, while* GERONTE *opens his purse*).

GERONTE. Sir!

SGANARELLE. No, no!

GERONTE. Wait one minute.

SGANARELLE. I will not.

GERONTE. I beg of you.

SGANARELLE. You are making a mistake.

GERONTE. No, no, it is all right.

SGANARELLE. I won't take it!

GERONTE. Why not?

SGANARELLE. I don't care to be doing cures for money.

GERONTE. I can quite believe that.

SGANARELLE (*having taken the money*). Is this now good money?

GERONTE. O, yes it is.

SGANARELLE. I am not a doctor that cares for profit!

GERONTE. I am sure of that.

SGANARELLE. It is not of gain I am thinking.

GERONTE. Such a thing never entered my head.

SGANARELLE (*alone, looking at the money*). Faith I haven't done so badly after all.

(LEANDRE *comes in cautiously by opposite door to that by which* GERONTE *has gone out. He comes close to* SGANARELLE *and speaks in a low voice.*)

LEANDRE. I have been waiting on the chance of seeing you, doctor. I have come to ask for your help.

SGANARELLE (*feeling his pulse*). A very bad pulse, very bad indeed.

LEANDRE. There is nothing wrong with my health, sir——that is not what has brought me.

SGANARELLE. If there is nothing ails you, why the mischief couldn't you say so?

LEANDRE. I will tell you the whole story in two words. My name is Leandre. I am in love with the young lady you have come to prescribe for. Her father is against me and won't let me see her, and I want you to help me in a plan I have thought out. My life and my happiness depend on my getting a chance of saying a few words to her.

SGANARELLE. What do you take me to be? What are you saying? How dare you come asking me to help to make your match! It is a right thing to ask of a doctor?

LEANDRE. Don't speak so loud, sir.

SGANARELLE (*pushing him away*). I will do as I like. What impudence you have!

LEANDRE. O, be quiet, sir!

SGANARELLE. Ah! even a fool should have more sense than that.

LEANDRE. I beg of you, sir——

SGANARELLE. I will show you I am not that sort of a man. Great impertinence indeed!

LEANDRE (*taking out a purse and giving it to him*). Sir——

SGANARELLE. Thinking to make use of me——(*taking the purse*) ——I am not speaking of you at all, sir, you are a real gentleman. Anything I can do for you, I will be well pleased to do it. Thinking I was of some that should know better——impudent chaps that would not give a man credit for being what he is——no wonder for me to be put out, thinking of them.

LEANDRE. I beg your pardon, sir, for taking such a liberty——

SGANARELLE. You are joking now——but tell what is it you are wanting?

LEANDRE. Well, sir, I should tell you, this dumbness you have been called in to cure is not a real disease at all. The doctors have given their opinions on it, they were bound to do that; one says it comes from the brain, one from the stomach, one from the spleen,

one from the liver. But I can tell you the real truth, love is the only cause of it. Lucy is only pretending to be dumb that she may escape from a marriage they are trying to force her into.——Just come with me——they might see us here——and I will tell you what my plan is.

SGANARELLE. Come on then, sir. It is a wonder now what an interest you have given me in your match. Believe me, the young lady will either die, or she will be married to you, as sure as I'm a doctor!

Curtain.

ACT III

SCENE. *Same as last.* SGANARELLE, LEANDRE.

LEANDRE. There now, I think I should pass very well for an apothecary. Her father hardly knows me by sight, he will never recognise me in those clothes and this wig.

SGANARELLE. No fear at all of it.

LEANDRE. All I want now is a few good medical terms to bring out when I am speaking, that will give me an air of learning.

SGANARELLE. Never mind that. The clothes are sufficient. Sure I know no more of medicine than yourself.

LEANDRE. What!

SGANARELLE. Devil mend me if I know anything at all about it! You are a gentleman, and I will tell you no lie, as you told me no lie.

LEANDRE. You are not really a doctor!

SGANARELLE. I am not. I tell you they made me a doctor in spite of myself. I never had tried for such great learning as that. All I could do never rose me from the bottom of the school. What it was first put the notion in their heads I don't know, but so soon as I found they had set their minds on making me a doctor by force, I made up my own mind I would be one at the expense of whoever would meet with me. You would hardly believe now the way the mistake has spread itself, everyone believing me to be a very skilful man. They are coming to consult me from all parts, and if things go on the way they are doing, it is as well for me to stick to doctoring to the end of my life. It seems to me it is the best trade of all,

for whether we kill or cure, we must be paid for the job. Bad work is never sent back on our hands, and we have leave to cut the stuff we are working on to our own liking. If a shoemaker, now, should spoil a piece of leather, he must be at the loss of it, but whatever injury we may do to a man, it costs us nothing at all. It is not on us the fault is laid, the fault is with the man that died. Another great advantage there is in our profession, the dead always keep a civil tongue, they are very decent indeed, you will never hear them make a complaint against the doctor that killed them.

LEANDRE. That is true. The dead keep a very honourable silence upon that point.

(GERONTE *comes in.*)

GERONTE. O, doctor! I was just looking for you.

SGANARELLE. How is the young lady getting on?

GERONTE. Rather worse since your prescription.

SGANARELLE. That is a good sign. It shows it is working.

GERONTE. Yes, but I am afraid that in its working it will choke her.

SGANARELLE. Don't be uneasy. I have certain cures against everything, but I delay giving them till the very last.

GERONTE. Who is that with you?

SGANARELLE (*making signs with his hands that it is an apothecary*). He is——

GERONTE. What?

SGANARELLE. He is——

GERONTE. Aye?

SGANARELLE. A man who——

GERONTE. I understand you.

SGANARELLE. Your daughter will be in need of him.

JACQUELINE (*bringing in* LUCY). Here is Miss Lucy, sir. She has taken a fancy to walk about for a while.

SGANARELLE. That will serve her. Go now, apothecary, and feel her pulse. I will be consulting you bye and bye about her complaint. (*He takes* GERONTE *into a corner and puts his arm round his shoulders to prevent him from turning his head towards* LEANDRE *and* LUCY.) It is a great question now among doctors, is it easier to cure a woman or a man. Listen to me now if you please. Some say it is, and more say it is not; but for my part I say it is, and it is not. Because, inasmuch as the incongruity of the opaque humours that meet in the natural temper of women, cause the animal part to gain the mastery of the feelings, we see that the difference in their opinions follows on the sideway motion of the

circle of the moon; and as the sun that darts its rays on the concavity of the earth finds——

LUCY. You may be quite sure that I can never change my mind.

GERONTE. My daughter is speaking! O, what great power there was in that cure! What a wonderful doctor! You can't think how grateful I am! What can I ever do to repay you?

SGANARELLE (*walking about the stage and fanning himself with his hat*). I have had a great deal of trouble over this illness!

LUCY. Yes father, I have recovered my speech, but I have recovered it to tell you that I will have no other husband than Leandre. It is no use your trying to force anyone else upon me.

GERONTE. But——

LUCY. Nothing can make me change my mind.

GERONTE. What?

LUCY. There is no use in wasting argument upon me.

GERONTE. If——

GERONTE. I——

LUCY. Nothing you can say will make any difference.

LUCY. I have made up my mind.

GERONTE. But——

LUCY. All the fathers in the world could not make me marry against my will.

GERONTE. I have——

LUCY. You may save yourself the trouble.

GERONTE. If——

LUCY. My heart will not give in to tyranny.

GERONTE. Then——

LUCY. I would rather go into a convent than marry a man I don't care for.

GERONTE. But——

LUCY (*speaking in a very loud voice*). No, no——by no means ——not at all. You are wasting time. I will not do it. I have made up my mind!

GERONTE. What a rush of words! There is no stopping her. I must ask you, doctor, to make her dumb again.

SGANARELLE. That now is more than I can do. All I can do for you, if you wish it, is to make yourself deaf!

GERONTE. I am much obliged to you. (*To* LUCY) Do you think then——

LUCY. No, no. I don't care for any of your reasons!

GERONTE. You shall marry the man I have chosen this very day.

LUCY. No, I would sooner marry death!

SGANARELLE. Be quiet, be quiet, and let me prescribe——I know the cure for whatever is wrong with her.

GERONTE. Can you cure the mind as well as the body?

SGANARELLE. Leave me alone! I have cures for everything, and the apothecary will be able to give me a hand this time. (*To* LEANDRE) Here I have a word to say. You see that the liking she has for this young man is quite against her father's wish. There is no time to lose, the symptoms are very acrimonious. It is needful to find some cure for this disease before it gets worse with delay. Now the only cure I can see is a dose of runaway oil, which you will mix as is right with two drachms of matrimonial pills. It is likely she may make some objection to taking this dose, but as you are a skilful man in your business you will bring her to it, and make her swallow it as well as you can. Go now and take a walk in the garden with her, while I stop talking here with her father. Mind above all that you lose no time, give her the dose and make no delay.

(LUCY *and* LEANDRE *go out.*)

GERONTE. What drugs, doctor, were those you were speaking of? I don't remember having heard of them before.

SGANARELLE. Drugs they are that are used in very severe cases.

GERONTE. Did you ever hear such insolence as she gave me!

SGANARELLE. Young girls are apt to be a bit headstrong.

GERONTE. You would not believe how she is set on this fellow Leandre.

SGANARELLE. The heat of the blood puts youngsters above themselves.

GERONTE. Ever since I found it out I have kept her under my eye.

SGANARELLE. You showed good sense doing that.

GERONTE. I have taken good care never to let them write to one another.

SGANARELLE. You did well.

GERONTE. If I had let them see one another, some folly might have come of it.

SGANARELLE. So there might, too.

GERONTE. I believe she would have run away with him.

SGANARELLE. She would sure enough.

GERONTE. I am told he has done his best to get a chance of seeing her.

SGANARELLE. Great folly, indeed.

GERONTE. He is only losing his time.

SGANARELLE. Ha, ha!

GERONTE. I will take good care he doesn't see her.

SGANARELLE. Ah, it is no fool he has to deal with! It's likely you know tricks he never heard of. Believe me, any person that knows more than what you know is a wise man.

LUCAS (*coming in*). What will you say at all, sir! Did ever anyone hear the like! Miss Lucy is gone away with Mr. Leandre! It was he was the apothecary! And who was it managed the whole trick but that doctor!

GERONTE. What are you saying! What a terrible blow! Go and call the constables! Don't let him escape; O, you rascal, I will give you up to the law!

LUCAS. Ah, ha, doctor, do you hear that! It's hanged you will be! Stop where you are!

(MARTHA *comes in.*)

MARTHA. God help us! All the trouble I had making out this house. What news have you for me now of the doctor I recommended you?

LUCAS. There he is before you, and he just going to be hanged.

MARTHA. What are you saying? My man going to be hanged! And what is he after doing to deserve that?

LUCAS. It is what he did, he got our master's daughter to be run away with.

MARTHA. My grief, my dear comrade, is it hanged you are to be?

SGANARELLE. You see the way I am. Ah——

MARTHA. And brought to your death with all the crowds looking at you?

SGANARELLE. Sure what can I do?

MARTHA. If you had cut all the scollops you had to cut itself, that would be some comfort.

SGANARELLE. Go away out of that! You are breaking my heart!

MARTHA. I will not. I will stop here to hold up your courage until you die! I will not leave you till such time as I have seen you hanged.

SGANARELLE. Ah!

(*Enter* GERONTE.)

GERONTE. The constables will be here in a minute. They will put you in a place where you will be well minded!

SGANARELLE (*on his knees*). Oh, oh, couldn't you be satisfied with a few blows of a stick!

GERONTE. No, no! I must give you up to justice——But what do I see here?

(*Enter* LEANDRE *and* LUCY.)

LEANDRE. Here, sir, I have brought myself before you, and I have brought Lucy back to you. We had intended to go and be married without your leave, but we think it better to act openly. I don't want to steal her from you, I want you to give her to me. What I have to say is, that letters have just come telling me of the death of my uncle, and that I have come into possession of all he had.

GERONTE. You are a worthy man, sir, and I give you my daughter with the greatest pleasure.

SGANARELLE (*aside*). Faith, the doctor has come well out of this scrape after all.

MARTHA. So as you are not to be hanged, you should be thankful to me for being as you are a doctor. It was I did that much for you.

SGANARELLE. You did; and you got me a great beating with a stick!

LEANDRE. You can afford to forget that now, all has turned out so well.

SGANARELLE. Very well, so; I will let it pass this time. I will forgive you the chastising I got in consideration of the trade you have started me in. But mind yourself from this out. Let you remember there is no worse thing to face in the whole world than a doctor's ill-will.

Curtain.

THE GAOL GATE

PERSONS
MARY CAHEL. *An old woman.*
MARY CUSHIN. *Her daughter-in-law.*
THE GATEKEEPER.

SCENE. *Outside the gate of Galway Gaol. Two countrywomen, one in a long dark cloak, the other with a shawl over her head, have just come in. It is just before dawn.*

MARY CAHEL. I am thinking we are come to our journey's end, and that this should be the gate of the gaol.

MARY CUSHIN. It is certain it could be no other place. There was surely never in the world such a terrible great height of a wall.

MARY CAHEL. He that was used to the mountain to be closed up inside of that! What call had he to go moonlighting or to bring himself into danger at all?

MARY CUSHIN. It is no wonder a man to grow faint-hearted and he shut away from the light. I never would wonder at all at anything he might be driven to say.

MARY CAHEL. There were good men were gaoled before him never gave in to anyone at all. It is what I am thinking, Mary, he might not have done what they say.

MARY CUSHIN. Sure you heard what the neighbours were calling the time their own boys were brought away. "It is Denis Cahel," they were saying, "that informed against them in the gaol."

MARY CAHEL. There is nothing that is bad or is wicked but a woman will put it out of her mouth, and she seeing them that belong to her brought away from her sight and her home.

MARY CUSHIN. Terry Fury's mother was saying it, and Pat Ruane's mother and his wife. They came out calling it after me, "It was Denis swore against them in the gaol!" The sergeant was boasting, they were telling me, the day he came searching Dairecaol, it was he himself got his confession with drink he had brought him in the gaol.

MARY CAHEL. They might have done that, the ruffians, and the

boy have no blame on him at all. Why should it be cast up against him, and his wits being out of him with drink?

MARY CUSHIN. If he did give their names up itself, there was maybe no wrong in it at all. Sure it's known to all the village it was Terry that fired the shot.

MARY CAHEL. Stop your mouth now and don't be talking. You haven't any sense worth while. Let the sergeant do his own business with no help from the neighbours at all.

MARY CUSHIN. It was Pat Ruane that tempted them on account of some vengeance of his own. Every creature knows my poor Denis never handled a gun in his life.

MARY CAHEL (*taking from under her cloak a long blue envelope*). I wish we could know what is in the letter they are after sending us through the post. Isn't it a great pity for the two of us to be without learning at all?

MARY CUSHIN. There are some of the neighbours have learning, and you bade me not bring it anear them. It would maybe have told us what way he is or what time he will be quitting the gaol.

MARY CAHEL. There is wonder on me, Mary Cushin, that you would not be content with what I say. It might be they put down in the letter that Denis informed on the rest.

MARY CUSHIN. I suppose it is all we have to do so, to stop here for the opening of the door. It's a terrible long road from Slieve Echtge we were travelling the whole of the night.

MARY CAHEL. There was no other thing for us to do but to come and to give him a warning. What way would he be facing the neighbours, and he to come back to Daire-caol?

MARY CUSHIN. It is likely they will let him go free, Mary, before many days will be out. What call have they to be keeping him? It is certain they promised him his life.

MARY CAHEL. If they promised him his life, Mary Cushin, he must live it in some other place. Let him never see Daire-caol again, or Daroda or Druimdarod.

MARY CUSHIN. O, Mary, what place will we bring him to, and we driven from the place that we know? What person that is sent among strangers can have one day's comfort on earth?

MARY CAHEL. It is only among strangers, I am thinking, he could be hiding his story at all. It is best for him to go to America, where the people are as thick as grass.

MARY CUSHIN. What way could he go to America and he having no means in his hand? There's himself and myself to make the voyage and the little one-een at home.

MARY CAHEL. I would sooner to sell the holding than to ask for the price paid for blood. There'll be money enough for the two of you to settle your debts and to go.

MARY CUSHIN. And what would yourself be doing and we to go over the sea? It is not among the neighbours you would wish to be ending your days.

MARY CAHEL. I am thinking there is no one would know me in the workhouse at Oughterard. I wonder could I go in there, and I not to give them my name?

MARY CUSHIN. Ah, don't be talking foolishness. What way could I bring the child? Sure he's hardly out of the cradle; he'd be lost out there in the States.

MARY CAHEL. I could bring him into the workhouse, I to give him some other name. You could send for him when you'd be settled or have some place of your own.

MARY CUSHIN. It is very cold at the dawn. It is time for them open the door. I wish I had brought a potato or a bit of a cake or of bread.

MARY CAHEL. I'm in dread of it being opened and not knowing what will we hear. The night that Denis was taken he had a great cold and a cough.

MARY CUSHIN. I think I hear some person coming. There's a sound like the rattling of keys. God and His Mother protect us! I'm in dread of being found here at all!

(*The gate is opened, and the* GATEKEEPER *is seen with a lantern in his hand.*)

GATEKEEPER. What are you doing here, women? It's no place to be spending the night time.

MARY CAHEL. It is to speak with my son I am asking, that is gaoled these eight weeks and a day.

GATEKEEPER. If you have no order to visit him it's as good for you to go away home.

MARY CAHEL. I got this letter ere yesterday. It might be it is giving me leave.

GATEKEEPER. If that's so he should be under the doctor, or in the hospital ward.

MARY CAHEL. It's no wonder if he's down with the hardship, for he had a great cough and a cold.

GATEKEEPER. Give me here the letter to read it. Sure it never was opened at all.

MARY CAHEL. Myself and this woman have no learning. We were loth to trust any other one.

GATEKEEPER. It was posted in Galway the twentieth, and this is the last of the month.

MARY CAHEL. We never thought to call at the post office. It was chance brought it to us in the end.

GATEKEEPER (*having read letter*). You poor unfortunate women, don't you know Denis Cahel is dead? You'd a right to come this time yesterday if you wished any last word at all.

MARY CAHEL (*kneeling down*). God and His Mother protect us and have mercy on Denis's soul!

MARY CUSHIN. What is the man after saying? Sure it cannot be Denis is dead?

GATEKEEPER. Dead since the dawn of yesterday, and another man now in his cell. I'll go see who has charge of his clothing if you're wanting to bring it away.

(*He goes in. The dawn has begun to break.*)

MARY CAHEL. There is lasting kindness in Heaven when no kindness is found upon earth. There will surely be mercy found for him, and not the hard judgment of men! But my boy that was best in the world, that never rose a hair of my head, to have died with his name under blemish, and left a great shame on his child! Better for him have killed the whole world than to give any witness at all! Have you no word to say, Mary Cushin? Am I left here to keen him alone?

MARY CUSHIN (*who has sunk on to the step before the door, rocking herself and keening*). Oh, Denis, my heart is broken you to have died with the hard word upon you! My grief you to be alone now that spent so many nights in company!

What way will I be going back through Gort and through Kilbecanty? The people will not be coming out keening you, they will say no prayer for the rest of your soul!

What way will I be the Sunday and I going up the hill to the Mass? Every woman with her own comrade, and Mary Cushin to be walking her lone!

What way will I be the Monday and the neighbours turning their heads from the house? The turf Denis cut lying on the bog, and no well-wisher to bring it to the hearth!

What way will I be in the night time, and none but the dog calling after you? Two women to be mixing a cake, and not a man in the house to break it!

What way will I sow the field, and no man to drive the furrow? The sheaf to be scattered before springtime that was brought together at the harvest!

I would not begrudge you, Denis, and you leaving praises after you. The neighbours keening along with me would be better to me than an estate.

But my grief your name to be blackened in the time of the blackening of the rushes! Your name never to rise up again in the growing time of the year! (*She ceases keening and turns towards the old woman.*) But tell me, Mary, do you think would they give us the body of Denis? I would lay him out with myself only; I would hire some man to dig the grave.

(THE GATEKEEPER *opens the gate and hands out some clothes.*)

GATEKEEPER. There now is all he brought in with him; the flannels and the shirt and the shoes. It is little they are worth altogether; those mountainy boys do be poor.

MARY CUSHIN. They had a right to give him time to ready himself the day they brought him to the magistrates. He to be wearing his Sunday coat, they would see he was a decent boy. Tell me where will they bury him, the way I can follow after him through the street? There is no other one to show respect to him but Mary Cahel, his mother, and myself.

GATEKEEPER. That is not to be done. He is buried since yesterday in the field that is belonging to the gaol.

MARY CUSHIN. It is a great hardship that to have been done, and not one of his own there to follow after him at all.

GATEKEEPER. Those that break the law must be made an example of. Why would they be laid out like a well behaved man? A long rope and a short burying, that is the order for a man that is hanged.

MARY CUSHIN. A man that was hanged! O Denis, was it they that made an end of you and not the great God at all? His curse and my own curse upon them that did not let you die on the pillow! The curse of God be fulfilled that was on them before they were born! My curse upon them that brought harm on you, and on Terry Fury that fired the shot!

MARY CAHEL (*standing up*). And the other boys, did they hang them along with him, Terry Fury and Pat Ruane that were brought from Daire-caol?

GATEKEEPER. They did not, but set them free twelve hours ago. It is likely you may have passed them in the night time.

MARY CUSHIN. Set free is it, and Denis made an end of? What justice is there in the world at all?

GATEKEEPER. He was taken near the house. They knew his foot-mark. There was no witness given against the rest worth while.

MARY CAHEL. Then the sergeant was lying and the people were lying when they said Denis Cahel had informed in the gaol?

GATEKEEPER. I have no time to be stopping here talking. The judge got no evidence and the law set them free.

(*He goes in and shuts gate after him.*)

MARY CAHEL (*holding out her hands*). Are there any people in the streets at all till I call on them to come hither? Did they ever hear in Galway such a thing to be done, a man to die for his neighbour?

Tell it out in the streets for the people to hear, Denis Cahel from Slieve Echtge is dead. It was Denis Cahel from Daire-caol that died in the place of his neighbour!

It is he was young and comely and strong, the best reaper and the best hurler. It was not a little thing for him to die, and he protecting his neighbour!

Gather up, Mary Cushin, the clothes for your child; they'll be wanted by this one and that one. The boys crossing the sea in the springtime will be craving a thread for a memory.

One word to the judge and Denis was free, they offered him all sorts of riches. They brought him drink in the gaol, and gold, to swear away the life of his neighbour!

Pat Ruane was no good friend to him at all, but a foolish, wild companion; it was Terry Fury knocked a gap in the wall and sent in the calves to our meadow.

Denis would not speak, he shut his mouth, he would never be an informer. It is no lies he would have said at all giving witness against Terry Fury.

I will go through Gort and Kilbecanty and Druimdarod and Daroda; I will call to the people and the singers at the fairs to make a great praise for Denis!

The child he left in the house that is shook, it is great will be his boast in his father! All Ireland will have a welcome before him, and all the people in Boston.

I to stoop on a stick through half a hundred years, I will never be tired with praising! Come hither, Mary Cushin, till we'll shout it through the roads, Denis Cahel died for his neighbour!

(*She goes off to the left,* MARY CUSHIN *following her.*)

Curtain.

THE RISING OF THE MOON

PERSONS
SERGEANT.
POLICEMAN X.
POLICEMAN B.
A RAGGED MAN.

SCENE. *Side of a quay in a seaport town. Some posts and chains. A large barrel. Enter three policemen. Moonlight.*

(SERGEANT, *who is older than the others, crosses the stage to right and looks down steps The others put down a pastepot and unroll a bundle of placards.*)

POLICEMAN B. I think this would be a good place to put up a notice. (*He points to barrel.*)

POLICEMAN X. Better ask him. (*Calls to* SERGEANT) Will this be a good place for a placard?

(*No answer.*)

POLICEMAN *B.* Will we put up a notice here on the barrel?

(*No answer.*)

SERGEANT. There's a flight of steps here that leads to the water. This is a place that should be minded well. If he got down here, his friends might have a boat to meet him; they might send it in here from outside.

POLICEMAN B. Would the barrel be a good place to put a notice up?

SERGEANT. It might; you can put it there.

(*They paste the notice up.*)

SERGEANT (*reading it*). Dark hair—dark eyes, smooth face, height five feet five—there's not much to take hold of in that—It's a pity I had no chance of seeing him before he broke out of gaol. They say he's a wonder, that it's he makes all the plans for the whole organization. There isn't another man in Ireland would have broken gaol the way he did. He must have some friends among the gaolers.

POLICEMAN B. A hundred pounds is little enough for the

Government to offer for him. You may be sure any man in the force that takes him will get promotion.

SERGEANT. I'll mind this place myself. I wouldn't wonder at all if he came this way. He might come slipping along there (*points to side of quay*), and his friends might be waiting for him there (*points down steps*), and once he got away it's little chance we'd have of finding him; it's maybe under a load of kelp he'd be in a fishing boat, and not one to help a married man that wants it to the reward.

POLICEMAN X. And if we get him itself, nothing but abuse on our heads for it from the people, and maybe from our own relations.

SERGEANT. Well, we have to do our duty in the force. Haven't we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It's those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it wasn't for us. Well, hurry on, you have plenty of other places to placard yet, and come back here then to me. You can take the lantern. Don't be too long now. It's very lonesome here with nothing but the moon.

POLICEMAN B. It's a pity we can't stop with you. The Government should have brought more police into the town, with *him* in gaol, and at assize time too. Well, good luck to your watch.

(*They go out.*)

SERGEANT (*walks up and down once or twice and looks at placard*). A hundred pounds and promotion sure. There must be a great deal of spending in a hundred pounds. It's a pity some honest man not to be better of that.

(A RAGGED MAN *appears at left and tries to slip past.* SERGEANT *suddenly turns.*)

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. I'm a poor ballad-singer, your honour. I thought to sell some of these (*holds out bundle of ballads*) to the sailors.

(*He goes on.*)

SERGEANT. Stop! Didn't I tell you to stop? You can't go on there.

MAN. Oh, very well. It's a hard thing to be poor. All the world's against the poor!

SERGEANT. Who are you?

MAN. You'd be as wise as myself if I told you, but I don't mind. I'm one Jimmy Walsh, a ballad-singer.

SERGEANT. Jimmy Walsh? I don't know that name.

MAN. Ah, sure, they know it well enough in Ennis. Were you ever in Ennis, sergeant?

SERGEANT. What brought you here?

MAN. Sure, it's to the assizes I came, thinking I might make a few shillings here or there. It's in the one train with the judges I came.

SERGEANT. Well, if you came so far, you may as well go farther, for you'll walk out of this.

MAN. I will, I will; I'll just go on where I was going.

(*Goes towards steps.*)

SERGEANT. Come back from those steps; no one has leave to pass down them to-night.

MAN. I'll just sit on the top of the steps till I see will some sailor buy a ballad off me that would give me my supper. They do be late going back to the ship. It's often I saw them in Cork carried down the quay in a hand-cart.

SERGEANT. Move on, I tell you. I won't have any one lingering about the quay to-night.

MAN. Well, I'll go. It's the poor have the hard life! Maybe yourself might like one, sergeant. Here's a good sheet now. (*Turns one over.*) "Content and a pipe"—that's not much. "The Peeler and the goat"—you wouldn't like that. "Johnny Hart"—that's a lovely song.

SERGEANT. Move on.

MAN. Ah, wait till you hear it. (*Sings:*)

There was a rich farmer's daughter lived near the town of Ross;
She courted a Highland soldier, his name was Johnny Hart;
Says the mother to her daughter, "I'll go distracted mad
If you marry that Highland soldier dressed up in Highland plaid."

SERGEANT. Stop that noise.

(MAN *wraps up his ballads and shuffles towards the steps.*)

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. Sure you told me to be going, and I am going.

SERGEANT. Don't be a fool. I didn't tell you to go that way; I told you to go back to the town.

MAN. Back to the town, is it?

SERGEANT (*taking him by the shoulder and shoving him before him*). Here, I'll show you the way. Be off with you. What are you stopping for?

MAN (*who has been keeping his eye on the notice, points to it*). I think I know what you're waiting for, sergeant.

SERGEANT. What's that to you?

MAN. And I know well the man you're waiting for—I know him well—I'll be going.

(*He shuffles on.*)

SERGEANT. You know him? Come back here. What sort is he?

MAN. Come back is it, sergeant? Do you want to have me killed?

SERGEANT. Why do you say that?

MAN. Never mind. I'm going. I wouldn't be in your shoes if the reward was ten times as much. (*Goes on off stage to left.*) Not if it was ten times as much.

SERGEANT (*rushing after him*). Come back here, come back. (*Drags him back.*) What sort is he? Where did you see him?

MAN. I saw him in my own place, in the County Clare. I tell you you wouldn't like to be looking at him. You'd be afraid to be in the one place with him. There isn't a weapon he doesn't know the use of, and as to strength, his muscles are as hard as that board (*slaps barrel*).

SERGEANT. Is he as bad as that?

MAN. He is then.

SERGEANT. Do you tell me so?

MAN. There was a poor man in our place, a sergeant from Ballyvaughan.—It was with a lump of stone he did it.

SERGEANT. I never heard of that.

MAN. And you wouldn't, sergeant. It's not everything that happens gets into the papers. And there was a policeman in plain clothes, too . . . It is in Limerick he was. . . . It was after the time of the attack on the police barrack at Kilmallock. . . . Moonlight . . . just like this . . . waterside. . . . Nothing was known for certain.

SERGEANT. Do you say so? It's a terrible county to belong to.

MAN. That's so, indeed! You might be standing there, looking out that way, thinking you saw him coming up this side of the quay (*points*), and he might be coming up this other side (*points*), and he'd be on you before you knew where you were.

SERGEANT. It's a whole troop of police they ought to put here to stop a man like that.

MAN. But if you'd like me to stop with you, I could be looking down this side. I could be sitting up here on this barrel.

SERGEANT. And you know him well, too?

MAN. I'd know him a mile off, sergeant.

SERGEANT. But you wouldn't want to share the reward?

MAN. Is it a poor man like me, that has to be going the roads and singing in fairs, to have the name on him that he took a reward? But you don't want me. I'll be safer in the town.

SERGEANT. Well, you can stop.

MAN (*getting up on barrel*). All right, sergeant. I wonder, now, you're not tired out, sergeant, walking up and down the way you are.

SERGEANT. If I'm tired I'm used to it.

MAN. You might have hard work before you to-night yet. Take it easy while you can. There's plenty of room up here on the barrel, and you see farther when you're higher up.

SERGEANT. Maybe so. (*Gets up beside him on barrel, facing right. They sit back to back, looking different ways.*) You made me feel a bit queer with the way you talked.

MAN. Give me a match, sergeant (*he gives it and man lights pipe*); take a draw yourself? It'll quiet you. Wait now till I give you a light, but you needn't turn round. Don't take your eye off the quay for the life of you.

SERGEANT. Never fear, I won't. (*Lights pipe. They both smoke.*) Indeed it's a hard thing to be in the force, out at night and no thanks for it, for all the danger we're in. And it's little we get but abuse from the people, and no choice but to obey our orders, and never asked when a man is sent into danger, if you are a married man with a family.

MAN (*sings*)—

As through the hills I walked to view the hills and shamrock plain,
I stood awhile where nature smiles to view the rocks and streams,
On a matron fair I fixed my eyes beneath a fertile vale,
And she sang her song it was on the wrong of poor old Granuaile.

SERGEANT. Stop that; that's no song to be singing in these times.

MAN. Ah, sergeant, I was only singing to keep my heart up. It sinks when I think of him. To think of us two sitting here, and he creeping up the quay, maybe, to get to us.

SERGEANT. Are you keeping a good lookout?

MAN. I am; and for no reward too. Amn't I the foolish man? But when I saw a man in trouble, I never could help trying to get him out of it. What's that? Did something hit me?

(*Rubs his heart.*)

SERGEANT (*patting him on the shoulder*). You will get your reward in heaven.

MAN. I know that, I know that, sergeant, but life is precious.

SERGEANT. Well, you can sing if it gives you more courage.

MAN (*sings*)—

Her head was bare, her hands and feet with iron bands were bound,
Her pensive strain and plaintive wail mingles with the evening gale,
And the song she sang with mournful air, I am old Granuaile.
Her lips so sweet that monarchs kissed . . .

SERGEANT. That's not it. . . . "Her gown she wore was stained with gore." . . . That's it—you missed that.

MAN. You're right, sergeant, so it is; I missed it. (*Repeats line.*) But to think of a man like you knowing a song like that.

SERGEANT. There's many a thing a man might know and might not have any wish for.

MAN. Now, I daresay, sergeant, in your youth, you used to be sitting up on a wall, the way you are sitting up on this barrel now, and the other lads beside you, and you singing "Granuaile"? . . .

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the "Shan Van Vocht"? . . .

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the "Green on the Cape?"

SERGEANT. That was one of them.

MAN. And maybe the man you are watching for to-night used to be sitting on the wall, when he was young, and singing those same songs. . . . It's a queer world. . . .

SERGEANT. Whisht! . . . I think I see something coming. . . . It's only a dog.

MAN. And isn't it a queer world? . . . Maybe it's one of the boys you used to be singing with that time you will be arresting to-day or to-morrow, and sending into the dock. . . .

SERGEANT. That's true indeed.

MAN. And maybe one night, after you had been singing, if the other boys had told you some plan they had, some plan to free the country, you might have joined with them . . . and maybe it is you might be in trouble now.

SERGEANT. Well, who knows but I might? I had a great spirit in those days.

MAN. It's a queer world, sergeant, and it's little any mother knows when she sees her child creeping on the floor what might happen to it before it has gone through its life, or who will be who in the end.

SERGEANT. That's a queer thought now, and a true thought. Wait now till I think it out. . . . If it wasn't for the sense I have, and for my wife and family, and for me joining the force the time I did, it might be myself now would be after breaking gaol and hiding in the dark, and it might be him that's hiding in the dark and that got out of gaol would be sitting up here where I am on this barrel. . . . And it might be myself would be creeping up trying to make my escape from himself, and it might be himself would be keeping the law, and myself would be breaking it, and myself would be trying to put a bullet in his head, or to take up a lump of stone the way you said he did . . . no, that myself did. . . . Oh! (*Gasps. After a pause*) What's that? (*Grasps man's arm.*)

MAN (*jumps off barrel and listens, looking out over water*). It's nothing, sergeant.

SERGEANT. I thought it might be a boat. I had a notion there might be friends of his coming about the quays with a boat.

MAN. Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were, when you were a young man.

SERGEANT. Well, if I was foolish then, that time's gone.

MAN. Maybe, sergeant, it comes into your head sometimes, in spite of your belt and your tunic, that it might have been as well for you to have followed Granuaile.

SERGEANT. It's no business of yours what I think.

MAN. Maybe, sergeant, you'll be on the side of the country yet.

SERGEANT (*gets off barrel*). Don't talk to me like that. I have my duties and I know them. (*Looks round.*) That was a boat; I hear the oars.

(*Goes to the steps and looks down.*)

MAN (*sings*)—

O, then, tell me, Shawn O'Farrell,
Where the gathering is to be.
In the old spot by the river
Right well known to you and me!

SERGEANT. Stop that! Stop that, I tell you!

MAN (*sings louder*)—

One word more, for signal token,
Whistle up the marching tune,
With your pike upon your shoulder,
At the Rising of the Moon.

SERGEANT. If you don't stop that, I'll arrest you.

(*A whistle from below answers, repeating the air.*)

SERGEANT. That's a signal. (*Stands between him and steps.*) You must not pass this way. . . . Step farther back. . . . Who are you? You are no ballad-singer.

MAN. You needn't ask who I am; that placard will tell you. (*Points to placard.*)

SERGEANT. You are the man I am looking for.

MAN (*takes off hat and wig.* SERGEANT *seizes them*). I am. There's a hundred pounds on my head. There is a friend of mine below in a boat. He knows a safe place to bring me to.

SERGEANT (*looking still at hat and wig*). It's a pity! It's a pity. You deceived me. You deceived me well.

MAN. I am a friend of Granuaile. There is a hundred pounds on my head.

SERGEANT. It's a pity, it's a pity!

MAN. Will you let me pass, or must I make you let me?

SERGEANT. I am in the force. I will not let you pass.

MAN. I thought to do it with my tongue. (*Puts hand in breast.*) What is that?

(*Voice of* POLICEMAN X *outside*). Here, this is where we left him.

SERGEANT. It's my comrades coming.

MAN. You won't betray me . . . the friend of Granuaile. (*Slips behind barrel.*)

(*Voice of* POLICEMAN B). That was the last of the placards.

POLICEMAN X. (*as they come in*). If he makes his escape it won't be unknown he'll make it.

(SERGEANT *puts hat and wig behind his back.*)

POLICEMAN B. Did any one come this way?

SERGEANT (*after a pause*). No one.

POLICEMAN B. No one at all?

SERGEANT. No one at all.

POLICEMAN B. We had no orders to go back to the station; we can stop along with you.

SERGEANT. I don't want you. There is nothing for you to do here.

POLICEMAN B. You bade us to come back here and keep watch with you.

SERGEANT. I'd sooner be alone. Would any man come this way and you making all that talk? It is better the place to be quiet.

POLICEMAN B. Well, we'll leave you the lantern anyhow.

(*Hands it to him.*)

SERGEANT. I don't want it. Bring it with you.

lies to them to protect Man

POLICEMAN B. You might want it. There are clouds coming up and you have the darkness of the night before you yet. I'll leave it over here on the barrel. (*Goes to barrel.*)

SERGEANT. Bring it with you I tell you. No more talk.

POLICEMAN B. Well, I thought it might be a comfort to you. I often think when I have it in my hand and can be flashing it about into every dark corner (*doing so*) that it's the same as being beside the fire at home, and the bits of bogwood blazing up now and again.

(*Flashes it about, now on the barrel, now on* SERGEANT.)

SERGEANT (*furious*). Be off the two of you, yourselves and your lantern!

(*They go out.* MAN *comes from behind barrel. He and* SERGEANT *stand looking at one another.*)

SERGEANT. What are you waiting for?

MAN. For my hat, of course, and my wig. You wouldn't wish me to get my death of cold?

(SERGEANT *gives them.*)

MAN (*going towards steps*). Well, good-night, comrade, and thank you. You did me a good turn to-night, and I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down . . . when we all change places at the Rising (*waves his hand and disappears*) of the Moon.

SERGEANT (*turning his back to audience and reading placard*). A hundred pounds reward! A hundred pounds! (*Turns towards audience.*) I wonder, now, am I as great a fool as I think I am?

Curtain.

DERVORGILLA

PERSONS

DERVORGILLA. *Once Queen of Breffny.*
FLANN. *An old servant.*
MONA. *His wife.*
OWEN. *A young man.*
OTHER YOUNG MEN.
MAMIE. *A girl.*
OTHER GIRLS.
A WANDERING SONGMAKER.

TIME—1193. Scene, outside the Abbey of Mellifont, near Drogheda.

SCENE. *A green lawn outside a garden wall.* FLANN *is arranging a chair with cloaks and cushions.* MONA *standing beside him.*

MONA. Put a cloak there on the ground, Flann. It would not serve the lady, the damp of the earth to be rising up about her feet.

FLANN. What ails her coming abroad at all, and the length of time she never asked to come outside the walls?

MONA. The young lads wanting to get prizes and to show off at their sports, it is that enticed her entirely. More sports there will be in it to-day than the most of them saw in their lifetime.

FLANN. Fighting and killings and robbery, that is the sport they were brought up to, and that is all the sport that was in it for the last twoscore years.

MONA. The Lord be with the good old times, when a woman suckling her child would be safe crossing Ireland from sea to sea! No wonder our own poor lady to be vexed and torn in the night-time. It seemed to me she had a very shook appearance this morning.

FLANN. There is no occasion for her to be fretting or lonesome, and the way her name is up through the whole of the province.

MONA. Why wouldn't it be up, after the way she fed old and young through the bad times, giving means and cattle to those the English had robbed.

FLANN. It is royal she is in giving as in race. Look at all the weight of gold the Abbey got from her, and the golden vessels upon the high altar.

MONA. No wonder the people to be saying she will surely get the name of a saint; the darling queen-woman of the Abbey of Mellifont.

FLANN. God grant it, God grant it. We have her secret well kept so far as this. It would be a queer thing if it would not be kept to the end. (*Shouts are heard.*)

MONA. It is the lads shouting for their own champions that are after beating the men of Assaroe.

(OWEN *and other lads come in.*)

OWEN. Is the lady herself coming out, Flann? Has she got good prizes in her hand?

FLANN. Good and too good. The lady is too much bothered with the whole of you, stretching out her hand to you the way she does.

ANOTHER LAD. Show us the prizes.

ANOTHER LAD. Are they there in the basket, Flann? Give them over here to me.

FLANN. Let you behave yourselves now and have manners, or you will get nothing at all.

OWEN. It is little we would get if you had the giving of it, Flann! Here, Mamie, come and see the grand things Flann is keeping under his cloak!

(*They all hustle* FLANN. MAMIE *runs in.*)

MAMIE. Do you see what is there beyond? Beyond upon the hill?

OWEN. A troop of men on horses. I suppose it is to race the horses they are come.

MAMIE. It is not, it is not; but a troop of English soldiers they are. Bows they have and swords. I am in dread of them. I went hiding in the scrub as they passed. Is there any fear, Flann, they will be coming to this place?

FLANN. Sure the lady herself is coming outside the gate. Would I let her do that, there to be danger in it? I tell you the place she is, is as safe as a burrow under rocks.

MONA. Let you stop your chat. Here she is now, coming to the gate.

MAMIE. I would never be in dread where she is. There are some say she has power from beyond the world, for there is no one knows her name or her race.

FLANN. Whisht, the whole of ye!

(*They stand back and* DERVORGILLA *comes in leaning upon her stick.* FLANN *and* MONA *lead her to her chair and she stands for a moment.*)

DERVORGILLA. God save you, children.

ALL. God save you, lady.

DERVORGILLA. His blessing be upon you, and my blessing, and the blessing of the summer time. Let me see that the doings of the great men are not forgotten, and that you can be as good runners, and as good hurlers, and as good at hitting the mark, as your old fathers were.

ALL. We will, we will.

OWEN. You will be proud, lady, to see what the men of Ulster can do against the men of Leinster and of Meath.

DERVORGILLA. That is so, I will be proud. For though I am an old woman given to praying, I can take pride yet in strength of body and readiness of hand; for I saw such things long ago in kings' houses.

OWEN. There is no fear of us at all! We will not be put down; we will gain the day! Come on, lads, some of the sports might be over. Come along, Mamie, and be looking at us from the bank of the embroiderers. (*They go out.*)

DERVORGILLA. It is many years since we had a day like this of sport and of mirth-making. It seems as if those were wrong who said the English would always bring trouble on us; there may be a good end to the story after all.

FLANN. There will be a good end, to be sure. A bad behaved race the people of this country are. It is the strong hand of the English is the best thing to be over them.

DERVORGILLA. England is a rich, powerful country to be joined to.

FLANN. We should surely grow rich ourselves joined with her, the same as a girl of the ducks and the ashes that would be married to a great lord's son.

DERVORGILLA. I can go in peace if I know I have left peace after me, and content, but sometimes I am afraid. I had a dream last night, a troublesome dream—What is that? I hear a cry.

(MAMIE *runs in with a dead bird.*)

MAMIE. Oh, look, lady, it is a crane. It is dead, they have shot it!

DERVORGILLA. The fowlers should have spared all life on a day of mirth like this.

MAMIE. It was one of the English bowmen; he shot it in the air. It fell at my feet. It died there at my feet.

DERVORGILLA. It vexes me, that to have happened on such a day as this.

FLANN. Get out of that now, Mamie. You should have more sense than to be bringing in a thing of the kind. Look now, there has blood dropped upon the lady's cloak. Bring it out of this and throw it in some place where it will be in no one's way. I wonder at you annoying the lady, and the way she is spending her means upon you all. (MAMIE *goes out.*)

DERVORGILLA (*looking at cloak which* MONA *is wiping*). It has brought to my mind other blood that was spilled, and that I, myself, have to answer for.

FLANN. You think entirely too much of it, lady, taking on yourself the weight of the bringing in of the English. It was the quarrelling of the provinces with one another brought them in.

DERVORGILLA. No, no. It was I brought them in for good or for evil, by my own sin and the wars that were stirred up for my sake.

FLANN. No, but it was in the prophecies that they would come. Didn't Blessed Caillen see them coming over the sea, and he at the brink of death waiting for the angels of God? There is no use at all trying to go against the prophecies.

DERVORGILLA. You are always trying to flatter and to comfort me, but surely I brought trouble upon Ireland, as well as on all I had to do with. Diarmuid, King of Leinster, that was my lover, perished like a beast fallen by the roadside, without sacrament, without repentance. It was I brought that curse upon him.

FLANN (*mutters*). It was he himself earned that curse; God knows he earned it well.

DERVORGILLA. Was it not I brought the curse upon O'Rourke, King of Breffny, the husband I left and betrayed? The head I made bow with shame was struck off and sent to the English King. The body I forsook was hung on the walls shamefully, by the feet, like a calf after slaughter. It is certain there is a curse on all that have to do with me. What I have done can never be undone. How can I be certain of the forgiveness of God?

MONA. Be easy now. Who would be forgiven if you would not be forgiven? Sure the Lord has seen your prayers and your crying, and your great giving and your holy life.

DERVORGILLA. Four years I have lived and fourscore, and for half my life I ran my own way, and through the other half of my life I have paid the penalty. For every day or night of pride or of pleasure, I have spent a day and a night of prayer and of pain. Will not that bring forgiveness? Is not that paying the penalty?

MONA. Indeed and surely you have made it up with God. Surely you are forgiven and well forgiven! It is God Himself will open to you the gate of heaven!

DERVORGILLA. But the people, the people; will they ever forgive what I have done!

MONA. They have enough to do to be minding themselves. What call would they have to go draw it down upon you at all?

DERVORGILLA. I dreamt last night that the people knew me, that they knew my story and my sin; that they knew it was for my sake the wars were stirred up and the Gall brought into Ireland. They seemed to curse and to threaten me. They stooped like this, to take up stones to throw at me, knowing me at last to be Dervorgilla!

(*A voice is heard singing.*)

MONA. Whist! Listen.

DERVORGILLA. What is that? Who is that coming?

FLANN. A beggar—some wandering lad. He has a great appearance of poverty. Will I go get something for him? There is no comfort at all comforts you like giving to the poor. Look now the way his shoes are broken!

DERVORGILLA. I can help the poor still. God gives me leave to do that. Thank God I have leave yet to be a giver of gifts. Go bring me shoes for him, and a cloak, and some silver money.

FLANN. Where is the use spoiling him with silver? Shoes are enough, shoes are enough. What call has a lad of his age to go begging; that is a trade of life should be left to give employment to the old.

(*He goes out. A ragged lad comes in. He is carrying a sort of rough fiddle.*)

DERVORGILLA. Where do you come from, boy?

SONGMAKER. From the province of Connacht I am come. Connacht yesterday, Armagh to-morrow. To-day it is Mellifont has got hold of me. (*Sings*)—

Yesterday travelling Connacht,
Drogheda has me to-day;
My back to the empty pockets,
My face to the place will pay!

DERVORGILLA. You are young to be wandering.

SONGMAKER. Where would I be stopping? This day five year the thatch I was reared under was burned by the Gall, and all I had of kindred scattered. I rambled Ireland since that time, just roving around. (*Sings*)—

Just roving around
To my grief and my sorrow,
Under a rock to-day,
Under a bush to-morrow.

It will be a long time till the Pope of Rome will get a hearth tax on my account, from the tax-gatherers of the King of England.

DERVORGILLA. Have you no trade that you can follow?

SONGMAKER. The best, the best. I have in me the makings of a poet—and a good poet—according to the treatment I would be given—one day sweet, another day sour. (*Sings*)—

Syrupy sweet to-day,
Sour as sloes to-morrow;
Sweet to the lads that pay,
Sour to the lads that borrow!

It is a sweet poem I would wish to be making in this grand place.

DERVORGILLA. You have no right to the name of a poet; you have not learned in the schools.

SONGMAKER. I did learn it well. Wasn't my grandfather a poet, and I reared up by him on the brink of a running stream? I know the rules well. Believe me, the mensuration of verses is a very ticklish thing.

DERVORGILLA. The old poets had knowledge from the well of wisdom. They could tell and foretell many things.

SONGMAKER. It is often the people far and near would draw to my grandfather to question him. Let them come to him, sick or sour, he had an answer for all of them, or a cure.

DERVORGILLA. Did you ever hear him say to any one that asked him, if a sin once committed could be forgiven?

SONGMAKER. It wants no poet's knowledge to know that. Can a sin be forgiven, is it? Why not, or who would people heaven?

DERVORGILLA. But—did you ever hear him say if it can be undone? Can a wrong once done ever be undone? Suppose there was some person who had done a great wrong, had brought, maybe, a bad neighbour into the house, or a hard stranger in among kindred—it might be a race, an army into a country. Could that person ever gain forgiveness, praying and sorrowing?

SONGMAKER. Well, God is good. But to bring in a bad neighbour is a hard thing to get over. It was a bad neighbour in the next house, drove St. Patrick back from Rome to Ireland.

DERVORGILLA. But if that neighbour, that stranger, that race,

should turn kind and honest, or could be sent back, and all be as before, would not forgiveness be gained by that?

SONGMAKER. Wait, now, till I think. There was something my grandfather, God rest his soul, used to be saying. He had great wisdom, I tell you, being silly-like, and blind. Wait, now, till I see can I sound it out right. Talking, the neighbours were, about St. Martin's mitten. It was St. Martin made a throw of his mitten at the mice one time they had him annoyed, nibbling at the oatenmeal in the mill; and, in the throwing, it turned to be a cat, and scattered them. That was the first cat that ever was in Ireland.

MONA. To be sure; to be sure; so it was. St. Martin's mitten was the first cat. Everybody knows that.

SONGMAKER. But it is what my grandfather said, that if all the saints in Ireland had wished it, and if St. Martin himself had wished it along with them, it would fail them to have turned that cat to be a mitten again, or the English to be quiet neighbours again, furry and innocent, and having no claws!

FLANN (*bringing cloak and shoes*). Give thanks now to the lady that is giving you more than you deserve. (*Hands him the things and some money.*)

SONGMAKER. My blessing down upon you, lady, whoever you are. Faith, you have a strong pocket! The house you are in is no empty house, or any bad house at all. (*He sits down on the ground and begins to lace on shoes, singing:*)

I am after being given two grand steppers,
  Matching one another like two swallows on the wind,
Made from the skin of the Brown Bull of Cuailgne.
  Or the cow Argus minded, he that was not blind.

It's the roads of the world will be proud to see them,
  It's a great ornament they will be, far and near;
She that gave them never learned to be a niggard,
  Though the Gall are among us this four and twenty year!

(OWEN, MAMIE, *and the rest run in.*)

OWEN. I have the prize won! I was best over the leaps. I have taken the sway!

MAMIE. My worked border was the best! Every one gave in to that!

ANOTHER LAD. I leaped very high; I leaped as high as that!

ANOTHER. It was I won at the hurley! I took the goal from the men of Meath!

DERVORGILLA. You have all done well. I am proud of you, children. I can give you all prizes. Flann, give me the prizes. (*He hands them to her and she gives them one by one.*) Here, Mamie, is a necklace from the Eastern world. You have earned it well by your worked border. Make the borders of your house beautiful. Keep within its borders all God has given you in charge. (*To* OWEN.) Here is a silver cup. (*To another.*) Here is a cloak with a brooch. (*To another.*) Here, you are the youngest, you must have a prize. Take this hurl, this silver ball. Practice with them well and you will be first yet. (*They all stoop and kiss her hand as she gives the presents.*)

FLANN. Give a good shout now for the lady. (*They all shout, the singer joins.*)

OWEN. Who is that? A stranger? He has not the look of our own people. Is he come to make sport for us?

DERVORGILLA. He is a maker of songs. He has the sweet voice of Connacht men. They have the soft sea mist in their mouths.

OWEN. Give out a song now, till we'll hear what you can do.

SONGMAKER. Give me the key so. There can be no singing without a key.

OWEN. What do you call a key?

SONGMAKER. Three keys there are; you should know that. It is only love or drink or friendship can unlock a song.

DERVORGILLA. Give him a cup of wine.

FLANN. Will nothing do him but wine? Wine that is too good and too strong. (*Gives him a cup,* SONGMAKER *drinks.*)

SONGMAKER. What will you have now for a song? Destructions, cattle preys, courtships, feats of battle?

OWEN. No, no; we are tired of those.

SONGMAKER. Well, I'll rhyme you out a verse about Finn and the Danish wedding.

OWEN. Those old songs of Finn and his men are only for winter nights, and the feet among the sods. Give us out a new song.

SONGMAKER. It is best keep to the old ones. The old ones are merry, but the new ones are sorrowful.

OWEN. The sorrowful songs are sometimes the best. They tell of the death of the big men and of the quarrelling of kings.

SONGMAKER. Well, if it is a sorrowful song you want, it is easy to find it, for there was not made these forty years any song or any story in Ireland that was not sorrowful. And if it is the quarrellings of kings you want, I will tell you of a quarrelling brought such trouble into Ireland, that if a grain of it could be blown through a

pipe in amongst the angels of heaven, it would bring a dark mist over their faces. (*Rocks himself.*) I tell you, that if the half of all the tears, shed through that quarrelling, could be sent through a pipe into hell, the flames would be put out, and the hearth of it black-flooded with otters!

OWEN. That must be the story of the coming of the Gall into Ireland.

FLANN. That trouble is surely lessening. There are no more killings. It is best to put away old griefs out of mind. Think now of some other thing. Something happened in Spain or in France.

DERVORGILLA. Do not meddle with him, Flann. It is not the telling of the story makes the story. Let me hear what is the common voice.

(SONGMAKER *sings:*)

It is pitiful and sharp to-day are the wounds of Ireland,
From Galway of white flaggy stones to Cork of the white strand;
The branches that were full of leaves and honey on the leaves
Are torn and stripped and shortened by the stranger to our grief.

It is long, O Royal Ireland, you were mannerly and kind.
A nursing mother to your sons, fair, hospitable, wise;
Now you are wine spilled from a cup beneath the strangers' feet.
The English-speaking troop to-day have trodden down our wheat.

The wild white fawn has lost the shape was comely in the wood,
Since the foreign crow came nesting in the yewtree overhead,
Since the red East wind brought to our hurt the troop of foreign rogues,
We are drifted like the wretched fur of a cat upon a bog!

FLANN. Where is the use of yelping and yowling like a hound that has lost the pack? Get out of this, if that screeching of a banshee is all that you can do.

DERVORGILLA. I have given him leave to sing his songs. Let him travel his own road. Let him take his own way.

SONGMAKER. It is hard for me to tell my story and that one not giving me leave to tell it. There must be a preparation for everything and a beginning. Wouldn't you hear the wind making its cry

about the house before you would hear the hammering of the rain upon the stones? Give me time now, and I will give out the story of a man that has left a name will never be forgotten here, and that is Diarmuid MacMurrough, King of Leinster, that first called the English into Ireland. (*Sings:*)

Through Diarmuid's bad sway we are wasted to-day,
It was he brought away the Queen of Breffny;
And when O'Rourke raised Connacht against him,
Gave the English pay to come to Ireland.

It were better for all that are under the Gall,
If death made a call and he in the cradle;
Bind him down very strong and bruise him long,
The way he can wrong us no more for ever.

His great body is down under the stone
Chased by the hounds were before the world;
It was Peter's own frown closed the door before him,
It is Diarmuid is bound in cold Hell for ever!

DERVORGILLA. That is enough, that is enough! Why should you heap up blame upon one that is dead? King Diarmuid's lips are closed now with clay. It is a shameful thing, a cowardly thing, to make attacks upon a man that cannot answer. Are you not satisfied to let God be the judge?

SONGMAKER. I had no intention to give offence. To dispraise Diarmuid and the English; I thought that would give satisfaction in this place, the same as it does in Connacht.

DERVORGILLA. Those that have a good heart and a high nature try to find excuses for the dead.

SONGMAKER. So they would, so they would. It is finding excuses we should be for the dead. There is an excuse for every one; the Blessed Mother knows that, and she sitting every Saturday as the attorney for poor souls. Making out a case for them she does be.

DERVORGILLA. There is no one who might not be freed from blame, if his case and what led to his wrongdoing were put down.

SONGMAKER. I'll make out a case for him. I can tell out what led King Diarmuid into his sin and his treachery; and that is the thing brings mostly all mischief into the world, the changeable wagging nature of a woman. (*Sings:*)

He cares little for life, puts trust in a wife,
It is long it is known they go with the wind;
A queer thing a woman was joined with O'Rourke
To show herself kind to a pet from Leinster.

The rat in the larder, the fire in the thatch,
The guest to be fattening, the children famished;
If't was Diarmuid's call that brought in the Gall,
Let the weight of it fall upon Dervorgilla!

(DERVORGILLA *tries to rise and cannot.* MONA *supports her,* FLANN *offers her wine. She lies back as if faint. They attend to her, their backs to the rest. The singer crosses to the young men, who give him money.*)

MAMIE. I often heard of Dervorgilla that left the King of Breffny for Diarmuid, and started the war, but I never heard what happened to her after.

OWEN. There is no one knows that. Some say King Roderick put her under locks in a cell at Clonmacnoise.

SONGMAKER. More likely she hanged herself, after setting the whole of the country in an uproar.

OWEN. If she did they had a right to bury her with a hound on her false heart, the same as Diarmuid himself was buried.

SONGMAKER. No, but Diarmuid's father was buried with the hound. Excuse or no excuse, a bad race they are, a bad race.

FLANN (*to* SONGMAKER). Quit off now out of this place before I will make you quit it. Take yourself and your rags and your venomous tongue out of this.

SONGMAKER. Let you leave me alone. Is that the way you are laying hands upon a poet?

DERVORGILLA. Leave him go, Flann. You are judging him now. God is the Judge; let him go.

SONGMAKER. Look at the way you have me tore! It is where I'll go on to that troop of English on the hill beyond. I'll sound my songs for them. I will get better treatment from them itself, than I am getting from you. If it wasn't for respect for the lady, it's a great overthrow I'd make of you. I'll go on to the English. (*He goes off, singing as he goes.*)

Since the Gall have the sway, it's for them I will play
There's none would lay blame on a boy that's a beggar,
But a queer thing a woman was joined to O'Rourke,
To show herself kind to a fox from Leinster!

OWEN. The English look to be friendly enough. They are drinking beer from the barrels. They are cheering the horses that go over the bank. Come along, boys, and see the big leaps.

MAMIE. Take care now, it would not be safe to go near the bowmen. Didn't you see the way they made an end of that crane a while ago?

OWEN. Flann said they would do no harm. I would like well to get a near view of the big bows. Come along, Mamie.

MAMIE. I will not. I will go into the garden of the Abbey.

(*She goes in through gate,* OWEN *and young men go out.*)

DERVORGILLA (*raising herself up*). Oh, my sin, my sin has come upon my head! Why did I come out from the Abbey walls? A cell is the only fitting place for me! I should never have come out into the light of the day!

FLANN. Ah, what does it signify? What is it all but a vagabond's song that was born in a minute, and will vanish away like a wisp of smoke.

DERVORGILLA. The dream of the night was true. It is coming true. My sin is remembered—I shall be known—I saw it all—they stooped to pick up stones—there was no forgiveness when they knew me to be Dervorgilla!

FLANN. That is a thing they will never know and that they have no way to know. Sure in the Abbey itself there is no one knows it outside the Order.

DERVORGILLA. It will be discovered, some one will see me.

FLANN. Ah, there are few living in any place that ever saw you in the old days. And if they should see you now itself, how would they know those holy withered cheeks to belong to the lovely lady that set kings fighting in her bloom? And many happenings have happened since then, and it is likely the Queen of Breffny is forgotten. Sure you heard them saying that Dervorgilla is dead.

DERVORGILLA. I will go in. Bring me back into the shelter of the walls.

FLANN. It might be best. There will be no drunken poets and schemers of the sort going in there to annoy you. It is too open-handed you are to them all, that is what makes them so stubborn and so high-minded. Gather up the pillows, Mona, till we'll bring the lady in.

MONA. It's best, it's best. Ah, don't be fretting, dear. There is no one on earth knows your secret and your name but myself, that was reared with you, and this man that is my own comrade. And you know well, and I swear to you, the both of us would be dragged

through briars, and ground under millstones, before we would consent to say out your name to any person at all. I would sooner my tongue to be turned to a stone here and now, than you to be uneasy the way you are.

DERVORGILLA. There is no hiding it, no hiding it. Dreams come true. Who was there to-day to tell it, and that beggar told the story. He will be singing it from troop to troop. The English will hear it, the runners will hear it, it will be blazed before night through the provinces, it will set them thinking of me, and talking.

FLANN. The devil skelp him! It would be no harm at all to come from behind and give him a tip of a hurl on the head to quiet his impudence and his talk. There is strength in my hand yet, and weight in my stick.

DERVORGILLA. No, no, I will not have any one hurt for my sake. I will have no other blood upon my head. But follow him, Flann. Go after him and put him under bonds to go away, to leave the province, to give up his singing. Give him money, all this money, that he may live in some far-away place, without singing and wandering.

FLANN (*taking the purse*). I will do that. Wait three minutes and I'll be coming back to bring you within the walls. I'll put him under heavy oaths to quit this, to go do his croaking with the crows of Scotland. That they may make an end of him with their beaks, and be pecking the eyes out of him, and lining their nests with every hair of his head! (*He goes off.*)

DERVORGILLA. It is of no use, dreams cannot lie, my punishment must come. I knew it all the time, even within the walls. I tried to make it up with good works. It was of no use, my name is in men's mouths.

MONA. What signifies one beggar's song? It is not on you the blame should be laid. It was not you went to Diarmuid MacMurrough. It was not you followed after him to Leinster. It was he came and brought you away. There are many say it was by force. There are many that are saying that. That is the way it will be written in the histories.

DERVORGILLA. If Diarmuid MacMurrough had taken me by force, do you think I would have lived with him for one day only? My hands were strong then. I had my courage then. I was free to make an end of myself or of him. Will the generations think better of me, thinking me to have been taken as a prey, like the Connacht hag's basket, or the Munster hag's speckled cow? Does the marten that is torn from the woods lull itself in its master's arms?

MONA. Maybe so, maybe so. I used to be better pleased myself

hearing them say it, than putting the blame on yourself of leaving O'Rourke.

DERVORGILLA. O'Rourke was a good man, and a brave man, and a kinder man than Diarmuid, but it was with Diarmuid my heart was. It is to him I was promised before ever I saw O'Rourke, and I loved him better than ever my own lord, and he me also, and this was long! I loved him, I loved him! Why did they promise me to him and break the promise? Why was every one against him then and always, every one against Diarmuid? Why must they be throwing and ever-throwing sharp reproaches upon his name? Had a man loved by a king's daughter nothing in him to love? A man great of body, hardy in fight, hoarse with shouts of battle. He had liefer be dreaded than loved! It was he cast down the great, it was the dumb poor he served! Every proud man against him and he against every proud man. Oh, Diarmuid, I did not dread you. It was I myself led you astray! Let the curse and the vengeance fall upon me and me only, for the great wrong and the treachery done by both of us to Ireland!

(*A loud cry is heard. Both look towards where it comes from.*)

MONA. Listen, listen!

DERVORGILLA. What is it? What is that cry?

MONA. It is like the heavy shout does be given out over a man that has been struck down by his enemies. (*The shout is heard nearer.*)

DERVORGILLA. What is it!

MONA (*looking out*). The young men are coming back. Their heads are drooping.

DERVORGILLA. God grant no trouble may have fallen upon them.

MONA. There is trouble, and heavy trouble upon them, sure enough.

(MAMIE *comes in from garden, young men come in.*)

DERVORGILLA. What is it, my children? What has happened?

OWEN. The truce has been broken. The wasp we thought drowsy has found its sting. The hand of the Gall has again been reddened.

MONA. Tell it out, tell it out, what is it has happened at all?

OWEN. Get ready for the burying of Flann of Breffny, the lady's steward and distributor, and your good comrade.

MONA. Ah! that is foolishness. It cannot be true. He was here but a minute ago, standing in this spot.

OWEN. It is true.

DERVORGILLA. How did he die? Tell me all.

OWEN. He came where that Connachtman was doing his tricks

for the English troop. They asked a song of him; he was going to give it out. Flann tried to bring him away. The bowmen had mugs of beer in their hands; they were laughing at the tricks; they wanted the song. They called out to Flann to leave him to make fun for them, but Flann tried to bring him away. He spoke in his ear; he put his hand over his mouth. They were rightly vexed then, and one of them called out: "There, spoil-sport, is a spoiling of all sport for you," and he drew his bow and sent an arrow through Flann's body, that he fell like a stone, without a word. Then they turned their horses, and one of them said it was a pity, but another said their dinners would be spoiling in Drogheda. And so they rode away in a hurry.

DERVORGILLA. Another. Death has come upon another. (*Holds out her hands.*) Come to me, my poor Mona, my friend.

MONA. Is it Flann is dead? Flann, my husband? He had a year less than I myself had. It was not his time to die. Who is there to close my own eyes now? He always said he would close my eyes.

DERVORGILLA. Your trouble is no greater than my trouble. It was for my sake and in following my bidding he died.

MONA. It was the Gall killed his two brothers and destroyed the house and trampled down the field of oats. What did they want killing him? Wasn't it enough to have destroyed his oats?

DERVORGILLA. Come into the Abbey and prepare for him there.

MONA. So near to the chapel, and not a priest to overtake him before he died. That was no death for a Christian man.

DERVORGILLA. Candles will be lighted, and many Masses said for his soul.

MONA. And if it was with the sword itself he was killed, that's natural. His brothers were killed with the sword. But an arrow! Not one of the family was killed with that before. That is not a thing you would be hearing in the ballads.

OWEN. Will you go where the body is? There are some that are laying it out?

MONA. I will, I will. Bring me to my decent comrade; and bring me to that singer was here. I will lay it upon him to make a great cursing to put upon the Gall, a great heavy curse upon all that had to do with the Gall. (*She is going off, but turns back to* DERVORGILLA.) But it is not on your self I will let them put a curse, or lay on you any blame at all. You know well I never put blame on you, or said a sharp word of you, the time you were in Breffny with O'Rourke, or the time you were in Leinster with Diarmuid Mac-

Murrough, and I myself following you from place to place. You know well, and the man that is stretched cold and dumb knows, I never said a hard word or an unkind word or a bad word of you yourself, Dervorgilla. (*She goes out babbling.*) Oh, no, no; I would never do such a thing as that!

OWEN (*to the others*). Dervorgilla! Oh, did you hear her say it is Dervorgilla?

DERVORGILLA (*stands up with difficulty*). Since you were born and before you were born I have been here, kneeling and praying, kneeling and praying, fasting and asking forgiveness of God. I think my father God has forgiven me. They tell me my mother the Church has forgiven me. That old man had forgiven me, and he had suffered by the Gall. The old—the old—that old woman, even in her grief, she called out no word against me. You are young. You will surely forgive me, for you are young. (*They are all silent. Then* OWEN *comes over and lays down his cup at her feet, then turns and walks slowly away.*) It is not your hand has done this, but the righteous hand of God that has moved your hand. (*Other lads lay down their gifts.*) I take this shame for the shame in the west I put on O'Rourke of Breffny, and the death I brought upon him by the hand of the Gall. (*The youngest boy, who has hesitated, comes and lays down his hurl and silver ball, and goes away, his head drooping.*) I take this reproach for the reproach in the east I brought upon Diarmuid, King of Leinster, thrusting upon him wars and attacks and battles, till for his defence and to defend Leinster, he called in the strangers that have devoured Ireland. (*The young men have all gone.* MAMIE *comes as if to lay down her gift, but draws back.* DERVORGILLA *turns to her.*) Do not be afraid to give back my gifts, do not separate yourself from your companions for my sake. For there is little of my life but is spent, and there has come upon me this day all the pain of the world and its anguish, seeing and knowing that a deed once done has no undoing, and the lasting trouble my unfaithfulness has brought upon you and your children for ever. (MAMIE *lays down her necklace and goes away sadly.*) There is kindness in your unkindness, not leaving me to go and face Michael and the Scales of Judgment wrapped in comfortable words, and the praises of the poor, and the lulling of psalms, but from the swift, unflinching, terrible judgment of the young! (*She sinks slowly to the ground holding to the chair. The stage begins to darken; the voice of the* SONGMAKER *is heard coming nearer, singing:*)

The rat in the cupboard, the fire in the lap;
The guest to be fattening, the children fretting;
My curse upon all that brought in the Gall,
Upon Diarmuid's call, and on Dervorgilla!

Curtain.

THE WORKHOUSE WARD

PERSONS

MIKE MCINERNEY, MICHAEL MISKELL } *Paupers*

MRS. DONOHUE, *a Countrywoman*

SCENE: *A ward in Cloon Workhouse. The two old men in their beds.*

MICHAEL MISKELL. Isn't it a hard case, Mike McInerney, myself and yourself to be left here in the bed, and it the feast day of Saint Colman, and the rest of the ward attending on the Mass.

MIKE MCINERNEY. Is it sitting up by the hearth you are wishful to be, Michael Miskell, with cold in the shoulders and with speckled shins? Let you rise up so, and you well able to do it, not like myself that has pains the same as tin-tacks within in my inside.

MICHAEL MISKELL. If you have pains within in your inside there is no one can see it or know of it the way they can see my own knees that are swelled up with the rheumatism, and my hands that are twisted in ridges the same as an old cabbage stalk. It is easy to be talking about soreness and about pains, and they maybe not to be in it at all.

MIKE MCINERNEY. To open me to analyse me you would know what sort of a pain and a soreness I have in my heart and in my chest. But I'm not one like yourself to be cursing and praying and tormenting the time the nuns are at hand, thinking to get a bigger share than myself of nourishment and of the milk.

MICHAEL MISKELL. That's the way you do be picking at me and faulting me. I had a share and a good share in my early time, and it's well you know that, and the both of us reared in Skehanagh.

MIKE MCINERNEY. You may say that, indeed, we are both of us reared in Skehanagh. Little wonder you to have good nourishment the time we were both rising, and you bringing away my rabbits out of the snare.

MICHAEL MISKELL. And you didn't bring away my own eels, I suppose, I was after spearing in the Turlough? Selling them to the nuns in the convent you did, and letting on they to be your own.

For you were always a cheater and a schemer, grabbing every earthly thing for your own profit.

MIKE MCINERNEY. And you were no grabber yourself, I suppose, till your land and all you had grabbed wore away from you!

MICHAEL MISKELL. If I lost it itself, it was through the crosses I met with and I going through the world. I never was a rambler and a cardplayer like yourself, Mike McInerney, that ran through all and lavished it unknown to your mother!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Lavished it, is it? And if I did was it you yourself led me to lavish it or some other one? It is on my own floor I would be to-day and in the face of my family, but for the misfortune I had to be put with a bad next door neighbour that was yourself. What way did my means go from me is it? Spending on fencing, spending on walls, making up gates, putting up doors, that would keep your hens and your ducks from coming in through starvation on my floor, and every four footed beast you had from preying and trespassing on my oats and my mangolds and my little lock of hay!

MICHAEL MISKELL. O to listen to you! And I striving to please you and to be kind to you and to close my ears to the abuse you would be calling and letting out of your mouth. To trespass on your crops is it? It's little temptation there was for my poor beasts to ask to cross the mering. My God Almighty! What had you but a little corner of a field!

MIKE MCINERNEY. And what do you say to my garden that your two pigs had destroyed on me the year of the big tree being knocked, and they making gaps in the wall.

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, there does be a great deal of gaps knocked in a twelvemonth. Why wouldn't they be knocked by the thunder, the same as the tree, or some storm that came up from the west?

MIKE MCINERNEY. It was the west wind, I suppose, that devoured my green cabbage? And that rooted up my Champion potatoes? And that ate the gooseberries themselves from off the bush?

MICHAEL MISKELL. What are you saying? The two quietest pigs ever I had, no way wicked and well ringed. They were not ten minutes in it. It would be hard for them eat strawberries in that time, let alone gooseberries that's full of thorns.

MIKE MCINERNEY. They were not quiet, but very ravenous pigs you had that time, as active as a fox they were, killing my young ducks. Once they had blood tasted you couldn't stop them.

MICHAEL MISKELL. And what happened myself the fair day of Esserkelly, the time I was passing your door? Two brazened dogs that rushed out and took a piece of me. I never was the better of it or of the start I got, but wasting from then till now!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Thinking you were a wild beast they did, that had made his escape out of the travelling show, with the red eyes of you and the ugly face of you, and the two crooked legs of you that wouldn't hardly stop a pig in a gap. Sure any dog that had any life in it at all would be roused and stirred seeing the like of you going the road!

MICHAEL MISKELL. I did well taking out a summons against you that time. It is a great wonder you not to have been bound over through your lifetime, but the laws of England is queer.

MIKE MCINERNEY. What ailed me that I did not summons yourself after you stealing away the clutch of eggs I had in the barrel, and I away in Ardrahan searching out a clocking hen.

MICHAEL MISKELL. To steal your eggs is it? Is that what you are saying now? (*Holds up his hands.*) The Lord is in heaven, and Peter and the saints, and yourself that was in Ardrahan that day put a hand on them as soon as myself! Isn't it a bad story for me to be wearing out my days beside you the same as a spancelled goat. Chained I am and tethered I am to a man that is ramsacking his mind for lies!

MIKE MCINERNEY. If it is a bad story for you, Michael Miskell, it is a worse story again for myself. A Miskell to be next and near me through the whole of the four quarters of the year. I never heard there to be any great name on the Miskells as there was on my own race and name.

MICHAEL MISKELL. You didn't, is it? Well, you could hear it if you had but ears to hear it. Go across to Lisheen Crannagh and down to the sea and to Newtown Lynch and the mills of Duras and you'll find a Miskell, and as far as Dublin!

MIKE MCINERNEY. What signifies Crannagh and the mills of Duras? Look at all my own generations that are buried at the Seven Churches. And how many generations of the Miskells are buried in it? Answer me that!

MICHAEL MISKELL. I tell you but for the wheat that was to be sowed there would be more side cars and more common cars at my father's funeral (God rest his soul!) than at any funeral ever left your own door. And as to my mother, she was a Cuffe from Claregalway, and it's she had the purer blood!

MIKE MCINERNEY. And what do you say to the banshee? Isn't

she apt to have knowledge of the ancient race? Was ever she heard to screech or to cry for the Miskells? Or the Cuffes from Claregalway? She was not, but for the six families, the Hyneses, the Foxes, the Faheys, the Dooleys, the McInerneys. It is of the nature of the McInerneys she is I am thinking, crying them the same as a king's children.

MICHAEL MISKELL. It is a pity the banshee not to be crying for yourself at this minute, and giving you a warning to quit your lies and your chat and your arguing and your contrary ways; for there is no one under the rising sun could stand you. I tell you you are not behaving as in the presence of the Lord!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Is it wishful for my death you are? Let it come and meet me now and welcome so long as it will part me from yourself! And I say, and I would kiss the book on it, I to have one request only to be granted, and I leaving it in my will, it is what I would request, nine furrows of the field, nine ridges of the hills, nine waves of the ocean to be put between your grave and my own grave the time we will be laid in the ground!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Amen to that! Nine ridges, is it? No, but let the whole ridge of the world separate us till the Day of Judgment! I would not be laid anear you at the Seven Churches, I to get Ireland without a divide!

MIKE MCINERNEY. And after that again! I'd sooner than ten pound in my hand, I to know that my shadow and my ghost will not be knocking about with your shadow and your ghost, and the both of us waiting our time. I'd sooner be delayed in Purgatory! Now, have you anything to say?

MICHAEL MISKELL. I have everything to say, if I had but the time to say it!

MIKE MCINERNEY (*sitting up.*) Let me up out of this till I'll choke you!

MICHAEL MISKELL. You scolding pauper you!

MIKE MCINERNEY (*shaking his fist at him*). Wait a while!

MICHAEL MISKELL (*shaking his fist*). Wait a while yourself!

(MRS. DONOHOE *comes in with a parcel. She is a countrywoman with a frilled cap and a shawl. She stands still a minute. The two old men lie down and compose themselves.*)

MRS. DONOHOE. They bade me come up here by the stair. I never was in this place at all. I don't know am I right. Which now of the two of ye is Mike McInerney?

MIKE MCINERNEY. Who is it is calling me by my name?

MRS. DONOHOE. Sure amn't I your sister, Honor McInerney that was, that is now Honor Donohoe.

MIKE MCINERNEY. So you are, I believe. I didn't know you till you pushed anear me. It is time indeed for you to come see me, and I in this place five year or more. Thinking me to be no credit to you, I suppose, among that tribe of the Donohoes. I wonder they to give you leave to come ask am I living yet or dead?

MRS. DONOHOE. Ah, sure, I buried the whole string of them. Himself was the last to go. (*Wipes her eyes.*) The Lord be praised he got a fine natural death. Sure we must go through our crosses. And he got a lovely funeral; it would delight you to hear the priest reading the Mass. My poor John Donohoe! A nice clean man, you couldn't but be fond of him. Very severe on the tobacco he was, but he wouldn't touch the drink.

MIKE MCINERNEY. And is it in Curranroe you are living yet?

MRS. DONOHOE. It is so. He left all to myself. But it is a lonesome thing the head of a house to have died!

MIKE MCINERNEY. I hope that he has left you a nice way of living?

MRS. DONOHOE. Fair enough, fair enough. A wide lovely house I have; a few acres of grass land . . . the grass does be very sweet that grows among the stones. And as to the sea, there is something from it every day of the year, a handful of periwinkles to make kitchen, or cockles maybe. There is many a thing in the sea is not decent, but cockles is fit to put before the Lord!

MIKE MCINERNEY. You have all that! And you without ere a man in the house?

MRS. DONOHOE. It is what I am thinking, yourself might come and keep me company. It is no credit to me a brother of my own to be in this place at all.

MIKE MCINERNEY. I'll go with you! Let me out of this! It is the name of the McInerneys will be rising on every side!

MRS. DONOHOE. I don't know. I was ignorant of you being kept to the bed.

MIKE MCINERNEY. I am not kept to it, but maybe an odd time when there is a colic rises up within me. My stomach always gets better the time there is a change in the moon. I'd like well to draw anear you. My heavy blessing on you, Honor Donohoe, for the hand you have held out to me this day.

MRS. DONOHOE. Sure you could be keeping the fire in, and stirring the pot with the bit of Indian meal for the hens, and milking the goat and taking the tacklings off the donkey at the door; and maybe

putting out the cabbage plants in their time. For when the old man died the garden died.

MIKE MCINERNEY. I could to be sure, and be cutting the potatoes for seed. What luck could there be in a place and a man not to be in it? Is that now a suit of clothes you have brought with you?

MRS. DONOHOE. It is so, the way you will be tasty coming in among the neighbours at Curranroe.

MIKE MCINERNEY. My joy you are! It is well you earned me! Let me up out of this! (*He sits up and spreads out the clothes and tries on coat.*) That now is a good frieze coat . . . and a hat in the fashion . . . (*He puts on hat.*)

MICHAEL MISKELL (*alarmed*). And is it going out of this you are, Mike McInerney?

MIKE MCINERNEY. Don't you hear I am going? To Curranroe I am going. Going I am to a place where I will get every good thing!

MICHAEL MISKELL. And is it to leave me here after you you will?

MIKE MCINERNEY (*in a rising chant*). Every good thing! The goat and the kid are there, the sheep and the lamb are there, the cow does be running and she coming to be milked! Ploughing and seed sowing, blossom at Christmas time, the cuckoo speaking through the dark days of the year! Ah, what are you talking about? Wheat high in hedges, no talk about the rent! Salmon in the rivers as plenty as turf! Spending and getting and nothing scarce! Sport and pleasure, and music on the strings! Age will go from me and I will be young again. Geese and turkeys for the hundreds and drink for the whole world!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, Mike, is it truth you are saying, you to go from me and to leave me with rude people and with townspeople, and with people of every parish in the union, and they having no respect for me or no wish for me at all!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Whist now and I'll leave you . . . my pipe (*hands it over*); and I'll engage it is Honor Donohoe won't refuse to be sending you a few ounces of tobacco an odd time, and neighbours coming to the fair in November or in the month of May.

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, what signifies tobacco? All that I am craving is the talk. There to be no one at all to say out to whatever thought might be rising in my innate mind! To be lying here and no conversible person in it would be the abomination of misery!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Look now, Honor. . . . It is what I often heard said, two to be better than one. . . . Sure if you had an old

trouser was full of holes . . . or a skirt . . . wouldn't you put another in under it that might be as tattered as itself, and the two of them together would make some sort of a decent show?

MRS. DONOHOE. Ah, what are you saying? There is no holes in that suit I brought you now, but as sound it is as the day I spun it for himself.

MIKE MCINERNEY. It is what I am thinking, Honor . . . I do be weak an odd time. . . any load I would carry, it preys upon my side . . . and this man does be weak an odd time with the swelling in his knees . . but the two of us together it's not likely it is at the one time we would fail. Bring the both of us with you, Honor, and the height of the castle of luck on you, and the both of us together will make one good hardy man!

MRS. DONOHOE. I'd like my job! Is it queer in the head you are grown asking me to bring in a stranger off the road?

MICHAEL MISKELL. I am not, ma'am, but an old neighbour I am. If I had forecasted this asking I would have asked it myself. Michael Miskell I am, that was in the next house to you in Skehanagh!

MRS. DONOHUE. For pity's sake! Michael Miskell is it? That's worse again. Yourself and Mike that never left fighting and scolding and attacking one another! Sparring at one another like two young pups you were, and threatening one another after like two grown dogs!

MIKE MCINERNEY. All the quarrelling was ever in the place it was myself did it. Sure his anger rises fast and goes away like the wind. Bring him out with myself now, Honor Donohoe, and God bless you.

MRS. DONOHOE. Well, then, I will not bring him out, and I will not bring yourself out, and you not to learn better sense. Are you making yourself ready to come?

MIKE MCINERNEY. I am thinking, maybe . . . it is a mean thing for a man that is shivering into seventy years to go changing from place to place.

MRS. DONOHUE. Well, take your luck or leave it. All I asked was to save you from the hurt and the harm of the year.

MIKE MCINERNEY. Bring the both of us with you or I will not stir out of this.

MRS. DONOHOE. Give me back my fine suit so (*begins gathering up the clothes*), till I'll go look for a man of my own!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Let you go so, as you are so unnatural and so

disobliging, and look for some man of your own, God help him! For I will not go with you at all!

MRS. DONOHOE. It is too much time I lost with you, and dark night waiting to overtake me on the road. Let the two of you stop together, and the back of my hand to you. It is I will leave you there the same as God left the Jews!

(*She goes out. The old men lie down and are silent for a moment.*)

MICHAEL MISKELL. Maybe the house is not so wide as what she says.

MIKE MCINERNEY. Why wouldn't it be wide?

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, there does be a good deal of middling poor houses down by the sea.

MIKE MCINERNEY. What would you know about wide houses? Whatever sort of a house you had yourself it was too wide for the provision you had into it.

MICHAEL MISKELL. Whatever provision I had in my house it was wholesome provision and natural provision. Herself and her periwinkles! Periwinkles is a hungry sort of food.

MIKE MCINERNEY. Stop your impudence and your chat or it will be the worse for you. I'd bear with my own father and mother as long as any man would, but if they'd vex me I would give them the length of a rope as soon as another!

MICHAEL MISKELL. I would never ask at all to go eating periwinkles.

MIKE MCINERNEY (*sitting up*). Have you anyone to fight me?

MICHAEL MISKELL (*whimpering*). I have not, only the Lord!

MIKE MCINERNEY. Let you leave putting insults on me so, and death picking at you!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Sure I am saying nothing at all to displease you. It is why I wouldn't go eating periwinkles, I'm in dread I might swallow the pin.

MIKE MCINERNEY. Who in the world wide is asking you to eat them? You're as tricky as a fish in the full tide!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Tricky is it! Oh, my curse and the curse of the four and twenty men upon you!

MIKE MCINERNEY. That the worm may chew you from skin to marrow bone! (*Seizes his pillow.*)

MICHAEL MISKELL (*seizing his own pillow*). I'll leave my death on you, you scheming vagabone!

MIKE MCINERNEY. By cripes! I'll pull out your pin feathers! (*Throwing pillow.*)

MICHAEL MISKELL (*throwing pillow*). You tyrant! You big bully you!

MIKE MCINERNEY (*throwing pillow and seizing mug*). Take this so, you stobbing ruffian you!

(*They throw all within their reach at one another, mugs, prayer books, pipes, etc.*)

Curtain.

GRANIA

PERSONS
GRANIA.
FINN.
DIARMUID
TWO YOUNG MEN.

ACT I

SCENE. *The scene is laid at Almhuin in Ireland. Time, evening. Inside a richly decorated tent; a fire in brazier centre, a high candlestick on each side; a table with round loaves and wine. An opening at each side of tent.* FINN *is leading in* GRANIA; *she is wearing a golden dress and jewels. Music and joyous shouts are heard outside.*

FINN. My five hundred welcomes to you, Grania, coming into Almhuin.

GRANIA. I thank you, Finn.

FINN. Who would be welcome if it was not the King of Ireland's daughter, that will be my wife to-morrow?

GRANIA. Your people that were outside and on the road lighted all the district with fires as I came.

FINN. We would have been better prepared if your coming was not so sudden at the last. You did not come too soon, that is a thing that could not happen. But the big house of Almhuin will not be set out fit for you till to-morrow, and it is in the tents of our captains you and your company must be sheltered to-night.

GRANIA. It was my father, before going to Lochlann, said he must leave me in a husband's care.

FINN. Who would protect you if I would not?

GRANIA. I am sure of that. Are you not the best of all the world's big men?

FINN. They told me you could have made great marriages, not coming to me?

GRANIA. My father was for the King of Foreign, but I said I would take my own road.

FINN. He has great riches and a great name.

GRANIA. I would have been afraid going to him, hearing talk of him as so dark and wild looking, and his shield tusked with the tusks of a boar.

FINN. You were not in dread coming to me, and you so delicate and so cherished?

GRANIA. I had an old veneration for you, hearing all my lifetime that you are so gentle to women and to dogs and to little children, and you wrestling with the powers of the world and being so hard in war.

FINN. It would be strange any person not to be gentle with you.

GRANIA. And another thing. I had no wish to go travelling forth and hither to strange countries and by strange seas. I have no mind for going through crosses. I would sooner pass my life at Almhuin, where I ever and always heard there are wide white halls and long tables, and poets and fine company.

FINN. Your father has a good house.

GRANIA. There was little to listen to but my father planning the wars in Lochlann. There was no pleasant stir in it, unless what there might be in myself.

FINN. It may be you will tire of Almhuin itself after a while.

GRANIA. There will be good company. I have heard talk of the men and the captains of the Fenians, of Oisin and Osgar and Goll, that came to meet me a while ago.

FINN. The man you will think most of is not with them to-day, that is my own kinsman, Diarmuid.

GRANIA. I heard of him often. They say him to be the best lover of women in the whole world, and the most daring in the war.

FINN. He has a good name from gentle and simple, from the big man and from the poor. Those even that have no call to him, cannot but love him.

GRANIA. It was he fought seven days and seven nights with the terrible wild ox upon the mountains.

FINN. Any time I am tired or fretted, all he could do for me he would not think it enough.

GRANIA. Where is he at this time, that he did not come to meet me with the rest?

FINN. I sent him to a far lonesome hill where I have a secret store of treasures and of jewels. It is right there should be a good man to guard them upon the road. It is for you he is bringing them, he will be here within a short while.

GRANIA. It is likely it is a man of that sort a woman would find it easy to love.

FINN. Did you ever give a thought to any man in the way of love?

GRANIA. I did—at least I think I did—but that was a long time ago.

FINN. Who was he? Did he belong to your own place?

GRANIA. I do not know. I never heard his name—but I saw him.

FINN. Did you speak to him?

GRANIA. No, he was but as if a shadow, that came for a moment and was gone.

FINN. Tell me all the story.

GRANIA. They had been hunting—there were a great many strangers. I was bade keep away from the hall. I was looking from a high window—then there was a great outcry in the yard—the hounds were fighting, the hounds the strange men had brought with them. One of them made as if to attack a little dog I owned at the time—I screamed out at the hounds. Then a young man ran out and beat them away, and he held up my little dog to me, laughing, and his cap fell off from his head.

FINN. Did they not tell you his name?

GRANIA. I was shy to ask them, and I never saw him again. But my thoughts went with him for a good while, and sometimes he came through my dreams.—Is that now what you would call love?

FINN. Indeed, I think it is little at all you know of it.

GRANIA. I heard often in the stories of people that were in pain and under locks through love. But I think they are but foolishness. There was one of a lover was made go through a fire for his sweetheart's sake, and came out shivering. And one that climbed to his darling's window by one golden thread of her hair.

FINN. There are many such tales and there are more in the making, for it is likely the tearing and vexing of love will be known so long as men are hot-blooded and women have a coaxing way.

GRANIA. I asked the old people what love was, and they gave me no good news of it at all. Three sharp blasts of the wind they said it was, a white blast of delight and a grey blast of discontent and a third blast of jealousy that is red.

FINN. That red blast is the wickedest of the three.

GRANIA. I would never think jealousy to be so bad a smart.

FINN. It is a bad thing for whoever knows it. If love is to lie down on a bed of stinging nettles, jealousy is to waken upon a wasp's nest.

GRANIA. But the old people say more again about love. They say there is no good thing to be gained without hardship and pain, such as a child to be born, or a long day's battle won. And I think

it might be a pleasing thing to have a lover that would go through fire for your sake.

FINN. I knew enough of the heat of love in my time, and I am very glad to have done with it now, and to be safe from its torments and its whip and its scourge.

GRANIA. It being so bad a thing, why, I wonder, do so many go under its sway? That should be a good master that has so many servants and is so well obeyed.

FINN. We do not take it up of ourselves but it sweeps us away before it, and asks no leave. When that blast comes upon us, we are but feathers whirled before it with the dust.

GRANIA. It is a good thing surely, that I will never know an unhappy, unquiet love, but only love for you that will be by my side for ever. (*A loud peal of laughter is heard outside.*) What is that laughter? There is in it some mocking sound.

FINN (*going to the door*). It is not laughter now—it is a merry outcry as if around some very welcome friend. It is Diarmuid that is come back.

(DIARMUID *comes in.* GRANIA *shrinks back from him.*)

DIARMUID. I am here, Finn, my master.

FINN. What way are you, Diarmuid? There is some wound upon your arm.

DIARMUID. It is a wound I was given on the road. But all you sent me for is safe.

FINN. I knew you would mind them well. But was that hurt cared and eased?

DIARMUID. It is nothing to signify. I drove the robbers off. All is safe. They are bringing the bags in here.

(*Two fair-haired young men come in two or three times laying bags on the floor during the next sentences.*)

I will stop here and mind them through the night time. I would sooner keep charge until you will open them for the wedding on the morrow. I will sit there by the hearth. They are jewels would be coveted by the witches of the lakes, or the sea-women sporting among the golden ribs and the wreckage of the ships of Greece.

FINN. It is to a woman worthy of them they are to be given.

DIARMUID. I am sure of that, indeed, and she being worthy to wed with you.

FINN. Come here, Grania, until I make you acquainted with the branch and the blossom of our young men.

GRANIA (*coming forward*). It is—who is it?

(*She gives a little cry and goes back a step as* DIARMUID *takes off his cap.*)

FINN. What is it ails you, Grania, that you are turned to be so wild and so shy?

GRANIA. It is that—that—he is wounded.

FINN. You have lost your talk on the road, Diarmuid, you, that were always so ready to string words and praises for comely young women.

DIARMUID. I had no time to wash away the dust and the sweat. I did not know Grania was in the place. You should have forewarned me.

FINN. He thinks you are vexed because he is not settled out in handsome clothes.

GRANIA. It is strange—it is all strange to me—I will get used to meeting strangers. Another time—in a very short while—my voice will be more steady—my heart will leave starting.

FINN. You will get courage knowing you are a queen. Where, Diarmuid, is the crown I bade you bring? It is not the high crown of pearls from the far Indies I want, but the thin golden crown shaped like the rising sun, that I thought of late would be never used, and that I had been keeping till I met with my own queen and my bride.

DIARMUID. It is wrapped about with tanned marten skins and bound with purple thongs.

FINN (*unwrapping it*). Come to me, Grania. (*He puts the crown on her head.*) Courage will come into your heart now, with this sign and token of your estate.

GRANIA. I am tired. It is weighty on my head—it is time for me to be with myself only. I have seen too much company since morning.

FINN. That is so, and I am much to blame, not taking better thought for you. Come to your women, they will bring you to your tent that is close at hand. You have travelled a long strange road, and to-morrow is your wedding day.

GRANIA. To-morrow? Could it not be put off for a while? This is but May, and no great luck in the moon. There is more luck in the last moon of July—or the first new moon after it. Put it off until that time.

FINN. That cannot be. Your father looked to me to put you in your right place without delay. You must be my wife to-morrow.

GRANIA. Must it be to-morrow?

FINN. All the armies are gathered together for that, and the feasts

are ready. You yourself will be ready when you have taken your sleep through the night time.

GRANIA. Sleep—sleep—yes, I will go sleep if I can.

FINN. Diarmuid is tired as well as you.

DIARMUID. I have no desire to sleep. I will sit and watch here till the dawn.

(*He sits down by the hearth, pulling cloak over his head.* GRANIA *turns back to look at him from the door as* FINN *takes her out. After a moment* FINN *comes back and sits near fire.*)

FINN. Tell me, Diarmuid, is it right that a man past the mering of age should give any thought to love?

DIARMUID. It is right for a man with a great burden of care upon him to have a place of his own where he can let it fall from him. And what is a home or a house without a wife and companion at the hearth?

FINN. That is so, and that is what I had in mind at the time this marriage was settled and pressed on, for the good of Ireland and my own good. But as to love, that is another thing.

DIARMUID. It is another thing, sure enough.

FINN. I thought myself on the far side of it and of its trouble and its joy. But now this young girl has come to me, so fearless, so mannerly, so plain and simple in her talk, it seems to me I would wed with her, and she not a king's daughter but a poor girl carrying the bag. (DIARMUID *nods, but is silent.*) It is not the one way with you and me, Diarmuid, for many women have offered you their beauty and themselves; but as for myself, there is no one I ever gave my heart to but was swept from me in some hard way. And this is come like good wine to the mouth that was filled for a long while with grey mist and rain. And indeed, indeed my heart leaps up with her. Is not that natural, Diarmuid, and she so well reared and so young?

DIARMUID. It is natural, indeed.

FINN. Would you not say her to be well shaped and of good blood and wise?

DIARMUID. She is all that, indeed.

FINN. It is not often I have known you to be so begrudging of praise.

DIARMUID. What call have I to be praising her? I could tell you no more than you knew before, through your own heart and through your eyes.

FINN. But, tell me this, now. Is she that is so airy and beautiful any sort of a fitting wife for me?

DIARMUID. You are brave and she will put her pride in you. You are the best of all, and she is a woman would only join with the best.

FINN. With all that, I would be well pleased if I could change my years for yours, Diarmuid. I would give you in their place all the riches I have ever won.

DIARMUID. Such a woman will be a right head for Almhuin. She is used to a king's house, she will be open-handed, and open-hearted along with that.

FINN. I think, indeed, she will be a right wife for me, and loyal. And it is well that is so, for if ever any man should come between her thoughts and mine I would not leave him living, but would give him the sorrow of death.

DIARMUID. There is no good lover in Ireland but would do the same, and his wife or his sweetheart failing him.

FINN. Yet, in the end there are but few do it; for the thought of men that have passed their midday is mixed with caution and with wisdom and the work they have in hand, or weakness is gaining on their limbs. And as for youngsters, they do not know how to love, because there is always some to-morrow's love possible in the shadow of the love of to-day. It is only the old it goes through and through entirely, because they know all the last honey of the summer time has come to its ferment in their cup, and that there is no new summer coming to meet them for ever. And so (*he gets up and stirs fire*) they think to carry that cup through life and death and even beyond the grave. But can I bring this young girl to be satisfied with that one love?

DIARMUID. There is no one among the men of Ireland can stand against your will. It should be easy for you to keep a woman faithful.

FINN. Yet the story-tellers make out that love is the disturber; that where it is on the road it is hard to be sure of any woman at all or any friend.

DIARMUID. It is I can give you out an answer to that. My master, you are sure of me.

FINN. I am sure of you, indeed, and it is many a time you put your life in danger for my sake.

DIARMUID (*standing up*). I am your son and your servant always, and your friend. And now, at this marriage time, I will ask one asking.

FINN. Who would get his desire and you not to get it?

DIARMUID. I am tired of courts and of sports and of wars where we gain the day always. I want some hard service to put my hand to. There are the dark men of Foreign, their King has laid it down he will come and master Ireland. Let me go out now and put him down in his own country.

FINN. I will give you leave, but not till after the wedding moon.

DIARMUID. No, but let me go now, this very night, at the brink of dawn.

FINN. No, but stop near me. You are more to me than any of my comrades or my friends.

DIARMUID. It is a strange thing, the first asking I have made, you have refused me.

FINN. Go then and take your own way, and my blessing go with you.

DIARMUID. I thank you for that leave.

FINN. But you will be tired out before morning. You have been on the road these three days, you got no sleep last night.

DIARMUID. I am drowsy enough and tired, but I will go.

FINN. Lie down over there upon the otter skins. I will sit here by the fire and keep a watch in your place.

DIARMUID. Make a promise then, to wake me at the first whitening of the dawn.

FINN. I will do that.

(DIARMUID *lies down on skins and sleeps.* FINN *looks at him a moment and covers him, then puts out candles and sits down where* DIARMUID *had been sitting, pulling his cloak over his head. Silence a moment,* GRANIA *comes in.*)

GRANIA (*in a low voice*). Diarmuid! (*No answer.*) Diarmuid! (*She comes nearer to* FINN *and speaks a little louder.*) Diarmuid, help me! (FINN *slightly moves.*) Give me your help now. I cannot wed with Finn. I cannot go to him as his wife. I do not know what has happened—half an hour ago I was content to go to him. You came in—I knew you—it was you I saw that day at Tara—my heart started like a deer a while ago. There is something gone astray—the thought of Finn is different. What way could I live beside him and my heart, as I am thinking, gone from him? What name might I be calling out in my sleep? (*She goes close to* FINN *and puts her hand on his shoulder.*) Have you no way to help me, Diarmuid? It would be a terrible thing, a wedded woman not to be loyal—to call out another man's name in her sleep. (FINN *gets up and goes back into shadow.*) Oh, do not turn away from me! Do

not leave me to the marriage I am in dread of. You will not help me? Is it you, Diarmuid, are failing me, you that came to my help that other time. Is it to fail me you will now? And is it my fault if this strange thing has come upon me, and that there is as if no one in all the world but you? You are angry with me and vexed, and it is a bad day, the day I came into this place. But I am not ashamed. Was it my fault at all? I will light now this candle, I will dare to show you my face. You will see in that I am not come to you as a light woman that turns this way and that way, but that I have given you the love I never gave to any man and never will give to any other! (*She lights candle and holds it up.*)

FINN (*sternly*). Grania!

GRANIA. Oh! It is Finn! And where then is Diarmuid?

FINN. There he is before you. It is the boy lying down and rising with me has betrayed me.

DIARMUID (*moving and starting up*). What is it? What has happened? Is that Grania?

FINN. You were looking for her to come. She was ready and willing. You are well fitted to rear traitors to one another.

DIARMUID. You are out of your wits. I had no thought she was coming here. What brought her?

FINN. Did she come giving you her love unasked? I thought she was a king's daughter.

DIARMUID. She is, and well worthy!

FINN. What was her mother then? Was she some woman of the camp? (*Pushes her from him.*)

DIARMUID (*putting his arm round her*). I will not let any man say that. (*Half draws sword.*)

FINN. My life is a little thing beside what you have taken!

DIARMUID. You are talking folly. You never found a lie after me in any sort of way. But the time courage was put in your heart there was madness furrowed in your brain!

FINN. Was it every whole minute of your life you were false to me?

DIARMUID. You would not have said that, the day I freed you from the three Kings of the Island of the Floods.

FINN. It is quickly you have been changed by a false woman's flattering words!

GRANIA. It is not his fault! It is mine! It is on me the blame is entirely! It is best for me to go out a shamed woman. But I will not go knocking at my father's door! I will find some quick way to quiet my heart for ever. Forgive me, Finn, and I have more cause

yet to ask you to forgive me, Diarmuid. And if there were hundreds brought together this day for my wedding, it is likely there will be at my burying but the plover and the hares of the bog! (*Goes towards door.*)

DIARMUID (*seizing her*). I will not let you go out this way. I will not fail you!

FINN. There is all your talk of faith to me gone down the wind!

DIARMUID. I will not forsake her, but I will keep my faith with you. I give my word that if I bring her out of this, it is as your queen I will bring her and show respect to her, till such time as your anger will have cooled and that you will let her go her own road. It is not as a wife I will bring her, but I will keep my word to you, Finn.

FINN. Do you give me your oath to that?

DIARMUID. I do give it.

FINN. It is the woman will make you break that swearing. There pitiful hag with the hair matted wild to her knees.

DIARMUID. It will not be broken. Let my own heart break and be torn by wild dogs before that promise will be broken at all.

FINN. The moon is coming now to the full, and before its lessening you will have lied to me.

DIARMUID (*taking up a loaf*). Look at this cake of bread. I will send you its like, white and round and unbroken at every moon of the year, full moon and harvest moon, while I am along with her, as a sign my own oath is in the same way clean and whole and unbroken.

FINN. It is the women will make you break that swearing. There will be another telling bye and bye.

DIARMUID (*taking* GRANIA'S *hands*). There is this league between us, Grania. I will bring you with me and I will keep you safe from every danger. But understand well, it is not as a wife I will bring you, but I will keep my faith with Finn.

GRANIA. Do as is pleasing to you. I have made an end of askings.

DIARMUID. Come out with me now, till I put you in some place of safety.

FINN. You will find no safety in any place or in any Connacht corner north or west. And out in the big world itself, there is no one will give my enemy so much as shelter from the rain.

DIARMUID. I know well I have earned enemies in the big world because I fought with all its best men for your sake.

GRANIA. Oh, take me, take me away out of this! For it is hard treatment is falling upon me!

DIARMUID. And I tell you, Grania, but that I am bound to Finn by my word I have given him, and by kindnesses past counting and out of measure, it would be better to me than the riches of the whole world, you to have given me your love!

GRANIA. I have given it to you indeed. (*She puts up her face to be kissed.*)

DIARMUID (*kissing her forehead*). That is the first kiss and it will be the last.

FINN. You will give up your life as the charge for that kiss!

GRANIA. Come out! Come out! The very blood of my heart is rising against him!

FINN. I will not let you go! Let our wedding be here and now, and I will call in as my witnesses to that word Goll and Oisin and Osgar and the captains of the armies of the Fenians!

(FINN *goes to door, blows horn, then turns towards* GRANIA *as if to seize her, sways and falls.*)

GRANIA. Oh, is it death!

DIARMUID. It is but a weakness that took hold of him, with the scorching of his jealousy and its flame.

GRANIA. Come away before he will rise up and follow us. My father's horses are in the field outside.

DIARMUID. Come out then to the hunting—for it is a long hunting it will be, and it is little comfort we will have from this out. For that is a man driven by anger, and that will not fail from our track so long as the three of us are in the living world.

(*The sound of many horns and shouts is heard at Right.* DIARMUID *opens door at Left.* GRANIA *goes out quickly. He follows with bowed head.*)

Curtain.

ACT II

[*Seven Years After*]

SCENE. *Interior of a rough tent. The door opens on a wood outside. A bed strewn with rushes.* DIARMUID *lying on it asleep.* GRANIA *is moving about and singing.*

GRANIA. Sleep a little, a little little;
Green the wild rushes under my dear.
Sleep here quiet, easy and quiet,
Safe in the wild wood, nothing to fear.

(*She stirs fire and puts some round cakes she has been making, to bake over it. Then comes to* DIARMUID *and puts her hand on him as she sings*:)

Waken darling, darling waken!
Wild ducks are flying, daylight is kind;
Whirr of wild wings high in the branches.
Hazel the hound stands snuffing the wind!

DIARMUID (*awaking and taking her hand*). There is a new light in your eyes—there is a new blush in your cheeks—there is a new pride stirring in your thoughts. The white sun of Heaven should be well pleased shining on you. Are you well content, Grania, my wife?

GRANIA. I am well content indeed with my comrade and my man.

DIARMUID. And did you love me ever and always, Grania?

GRANIA. Did I not tell you long ago, my heart went down to you the day I looked from the high window, and I in my young youth at Tara.

DIARMUID. It was a long waiting we had for our marriage time.

GRANIA. It was a long waiting, surely.

DIARMUID. Let us put it out of mind and not be remembering it at all. This last moon has made up for all those seven years.

GRANIA. It was a troublesome time indeed and a very troublesome life. In all that time we never stopped in any place so long as in the shades and the shelters of this wood.

DIARMUID. It seems to me only one day we have been in it. I

would not be sorry in this place, there to be the length of a year in the day.

GRANIA. The young leaves on the beach trees have unfolded since we came.

DIARMUID. I did not take notice of their growth. Oh, my dear, you are as beautiful as the blossoming of the wild furze on the hill.

GRANIA. It was not love that brought you to wed me in the end.

DIARMUID. It was, surely, and no other thing. What is there but love can twist a man's life, as sally rods are twisted for a gad?

GRANIA. No, it was jealousy, jealousy of the King of Foreign, that wild dark man, that broke the hedge between us and levelled the wall.

DIARMUID (*starting up*). Do not bring him back to mind! It was rage that cracked me, when I saw him put his arms about you as if to bring you away.

GRANIA. Was it my fault? I was but gathering a sheaf of rushes for our two beds, and I saw him coming alongside of the stream to the pool. I knew him by the tusks on his shield and the bristled boar-skin cloak.

DIARMUID. What was it ailed you not to call to me?

GRANIA. You were far away—you would not have heard me—it is he himself would have heard my call. And I was no way afraid —I hid myself up in the branches of the big red sally by the pool.

DIARMUID. That was a foolish place to go hiding.

GRANIA. I thought myself safe and well hidden on the branch that goes over the stream. What way could I know he would stop at that very place, to wash the otter blood from his spear, and the blood from his hands, and the sweat?

DIARMUID. If I had been near, it is his own blood would have splashed away in the pool.

GRANIA. He stopped then to throw the water on his face—it was my own face he saw in the pool. He looked up of a sudden—he gave a great delighted laugh.

DIARMUID. My lasting grief that I was not there, and my hand gripping his throat.

GRANIA. He bent the branch—he lifted me from it—he not to have caught me in his arms I would have fallen in the stream.

DIARMUID. That itself might have been better than his hand to have rested on you at all!

GRANIA. Then you were there—within one minute. You should likely have heard the great shout he gave out and the laugh?

DIARMUID. I lifted my hand to strike at him, and it was as if struck down. It is grief to my heart that he escaped me! I would have crushed him and destroyed him and broken his carcase against the rocks.

GRANIA. It was I myself struck your hand down. I was well pleased seeing you in that rage of anger.

DIARMUID. If I had known that, it is likely I would have killed you in his place.

GRANIA. But you did not kill me.

DIARMUID. What was it happened? I was as if blind—you were in my arms not his,—my lips were on the lips he had nearly touched, that I myself had never touched in all those seven years.

GRANIA. It was a long, long kiss.

DIARMUID. That moment was like the whole of life in a single day, and yet it was but a second of time. And when I looked around he was gone, and there was no trace of him and he had made away and I could not kill him.

GRANIA. What matter? You should forgive him, seeing it was he brought us together at the last. You should help him to win another kingdom for that good deed. There is nothing will come between us now. You are entirely my own.

DIARMUID. I am belonging to you, indeed, now and for ever. I will bring you away from this rambling life, to a place will be all our own. We will do away with this trade of wandering, we will go on to that bare shore between Burren and the big sea. There will be no trace of our footsteps on the hard flagstones.

GRANIA. We were in that craggy place before and we were forced to quit it. To live on the wind and on the air you cannot. The wind is not able to support anybody.

DIARMUID. We will get a currach this time. We will go out over the waves to an island. The sea and the strand are wholesome. We shall sleep well, and the tide beating its watch around us.

GRANIA. Even out in those far Aran Islands we would be threatened and driven as happened in the time past.

DIARMUID. But beyond Aran, far out in the west, there is another island that is seen but once in every seven years.

GRANIA. Is that a real place at all? Or is it only in the nurses' tales?

DIARMUID. Who knows? There is no good lover but has seen it at some time through his sleep. It is hid under a light mist, away from the track of traders and kings and robbers. The harbour is well fenced to keep out loud creaking ships. Some fisherman to

break through the mist at some time, he will bring back news of a place where there is better love and a better life than in any lovely corner of the world that is known. (*She turns away.*) And will you come there with me, Grania?

GRANIA. I am willing to go from this. We cannot stop always in the darkness of the woods—but I am thinking it should be very strange there and very lonesome.

DIARMUID. The sea-women will rise up giving out news of the Country-under-Wave, and the birds will have talk as in the old days. And maybe some that are beyond the world will come to keep us company, seeing we are fitted to be among them by our unchanging love.

GRANIA. We are going a long time without seeing any of the people of the world, unless it might be herds and fowlers, and robbers that are hiding in the wood.

DIARMUID. It is enough for us having one another. I would sooner be talking with you than the world wide.

GRANIA. It is likely some day you will be craving to be back with the Fenians.

DIARMUID. I was fretting after them for a while. But now they are slipping out of mind. It would seem as if some soul-brother of my own were calling to me from outside the world. It may be they have need of my strength to help them in their hurling and their wars.

GRANIA. I have not had the full of my life yet, for it is scared and hiding I have spent the best of my years that are past. And no one coming to give us news or knowledge, and no friendly thing at all at hand, unless it might be Hazel the hound, or that I might throw out a handful of meal to the birds to bring me company. I would wish to bring you back now to some busy peopled place.

DIARMUID. You never asked to be brought to such a place in all our time upon the road. And are you not better pleased now than when we dragged lonely-hearted and sore-footed through the days?

GRANIA. I am better pleased, surely—and it is by reason of that I would wish my happiness to be seen, and not to be hidden under the branches and twigs of trees.

DIARMUID. If I am content here, why would not you be content?

GRANIA. It is time for you to have attendance again, and good company about you. We are the same here as if settled in the clay, clogged with the body and providing for its hunger and its needs, and the readying of the dinner of to-day and the providing of the dinner for to-morrow. It is at the head of long tables we should be,

listening to the old men with their jokes and flatteries, and the young men making their plans that will change the entire world.

DIARMUID. That is all over for me now, and cast away like the husk from the nut.

GRANIA. They will be forgetting us altogether.

DIARMUID. No, but they will put us into songs, till the world will wonder at the luck of those two lovers that carried love entire and unbroken out beyond the rim of sight.

GRANIA. That may be. And some night at the supper the men will turn their heads hearing that song and will say, "Is Diarmuid living yet?" or "Grania must be withered now and a great trouble to those that are about her." And they will turn to the women that are smiling beside them, and that have delicate hands, and little blushes in their cheeks, and that are maybe but my own age all the same, but have kept their young looks, being merry and well cared. And Grania and Diarmuid will be no more than a memory and a name.

DIARMUID (*taking her hand*). These white hands were always willing hands, and where, I wonder, was this discontent born? A little while ago it was the woods you wanted, and now it is the palaces you want.

GRANIA. It is not my mind that changes, it is life that changes about me. If I was content to be in hiding a while ago, now I am proud and have a right to be proud. And it is hard to nourish pride in a house having two in it only.

DIARMUID. I take pride in you here, the same as I would in any other place.

GRANIA. Listen to me. You are driving me to excuses and to words that are not entirely true. But here, now, is truth for you. All the years we were with ourselves only, you kept apart from me as if I was a shadow-shape or a hag of the valley. And it was not till you saw another man craving my love, that the like love was born in yourself. And I will go no more wearing out my time in lonely places, where the martens and hares and badgers run from my path, but it is to thronged places I will go, where it is not through the eyes of wild startled beasts you will be looking at me, but through the eyes of kings' sons that will be saying: "It is no wonder Diarmuid to have gone through his crosses for such a wife!" And I will overhear their sweethearts saying: "I would give the riches of the world, Diarmuid to be my own comrade." And our love will be kept kindled for ever, that would be spent and consumed in desolate places, like the rushlight in a cabin by the bog. For it is

certain it is by the respect of others we partly judge even those we know through and through.

DIARMUID (*getting up and speaking gravely*). There is no going back for us, Grania, and you know that well yourself.

GRANIA. We will go to my father's house—he is grown old, he will not refuse me—we will call to your people and to my people—we will bring together an army of our own.

DIARMUID. That is enough of arguing. There is no sense or no reason in what you are saying.

GRANIA. It is a bad time you have chosen to give up your mannerly ways. You did not speak that way the day you found me in the hand of the King of Foreign. You would maybe be better pleased if I had gone with him at that time.

DIARMUID. You are but saying that to vex and to annoy me. You are talking like an innocent or a fool.

GRANIA. He made me great promises. A great place and power and great riches.

DIARMUID. I can win you riches in plenty if that is what you are coveting in your mind.

GRANIA. I cared little for his talk of riches—but—when he put his arms about me and kissed me——

DIARMUID. You let him leave a kiss upon your mouth?

GRANIA. It as if frightened me—it seemed strange to me—there came as if a trembling in my limbs. I said: "I am this long time going with the third best man of the Fenians, and he never came as near as that to me."

DIARMUID (*flinging her from him*). Go then your own way, and I would be well pleased never to have met you, and I was no better than a fool, thinking any woman at all could give love would last longer than the froth upon the stream!

(*The sound of a rattle is heard outside.*)

GRANIA. What is that? Who is it?

(FINN *disguised as a beggar is seen at door.*)

DIARMUID. It is but a beggar or a leper.

FINN. Is this a house is sheltering a handsome young woman and a lathy tall young man, that are not belonging to this district, and having no follower but a hound?

DIARMUID. Who are you? Keep back from the door!

FINN. I am no leper if I am a beggar. And my name is well earned that is Half-Man—for there is left to me but one arm by the wolves, and one side of my face by the crows that came picking at me on the ridge where I was left for dead. And beyond that again,

one of the feet rotted from me, where I got it hurted one time through a wound was given me by treachery in the heel.

DIARMUID. Take off that mask till I see your face.

FINN. I will and welcome, if you have a mind to see it, but it is not right a lovely young lady to get a view of a bare gnawed skull, and that is what this caul covers. It is by reason of that I go sounding the rattle, to scare children from the path before me, and women carrying child.

DIARMUID. If it is alms you are seeking it is a bare place to come, for we carry neither gold or silver, there being no market in the woods.

FINN. Not at all, not at all—I am asking nothing at all. Believe me, the man that sent me is a good payer of wages.

DIARMUID. What call had he to send you here? We own nothing for any man to covet.

FINN. With a message he sent me, a message. You to be the man and the young woman I am searching after, I have to give a message and get a message. That is all the business I have to do. I will get fair play, never fear, from the man that sent me.

DIARMUID. Tell me who is that man, till I know is he enemy or friend.

FINN. You to see him you would not forget him. A man he is, giving out gold from his hand the same as withered leaves, and having on his shield the likeness of the rising sun.

GRANIA. That can surely be no other than Finn. What did he want sending you?

FINN. I will tell you that, and it is little I know why would he want it. You would not say him to be a man would be in need of bread.

GRANIA. Tell out now what you have to tell.

FINN. Wouldn't you say it to be a strange thing, a man having that much gold in his hand, and the sun in gold on his shield, to be as hungry after bread as a strayed cur dog would have nothing to eat or to fall back on, and would be yelping after his meal.

DIARMUID. Give out the message.

FINN. It is what he bade me say: "Tell that young woman," he said, "and that youngster with her," he said, "that on every first night of the round moon these seven years, there used to be a round cake of bread laid upon my road. And the moon was at her strength yesterday," he said, "and it has failed me to find on any path that cake of bread."

DIARMUID. It is Finn that sent him! It is Finn is calling me to

account because I have forgotten my promise to him, and my faith.

GRANIA. He has come upon our track. We must go our road again. It is often we escaped him before this. I am no way afraid.

DIARMUID. It is not fear that is on me, it is shame. Shame because Finn thought me a man would hold to my word, and I have not held to it. I am as if torn and broken with the thought and the memory of Finn.

GRANIA. It is time to put away that memory. It is long enough you gave in to his orders.

DIARMUID. I did that with my own consent. Nothing he put upon me was hard. He trusted me and he could trust me, and now he will never put trust in me again.

GRANIA. It may not be Finn will be getting his commands done, and our friends gathering to our help. Let him learn that time, not to thrust his hand between the wedges and the splint.

FINN (*who has been sitting crouched over fire*). Have you the message ready and the bread I was bade bring back to the champion that met me on the path?

GRANIA (*taking up one of the cakes*). It is best send it to him and gain the time to make our escape.

DIARMUID. No, no more lying. I will tell no more lies to my master and my friend!

(DIARMUID *takes cake from* GRANIA *and flings it down, then throws himself on the bed and covers his face with his hands.* GRANIA *takes up cake, breaks it again and again, and gives it to* FINN.)

GRANIA. That is the answer to his message. Say to him that as that bread is broken and torn, so is the promise given by the man that did right in breaking it. Tell Finn, the time you meet him, it was the woman herself gave that to you, and bade you leave it in his hand as a message and as a sign!

FINN. Take care now. Is that a right message you are sending, and one that you will not repent?

GRANIA. It is a right message for that man to get. And give heed to what I say now. If you have one eye is blind, let it be turned to the place where we are, and that he might ask news of. And if you have one seeing eye, cast it upon me, and tell Finn you saw a woman no way sad or afraid, but as airy and high-minded as a mountain filly would be challenging the winds of March!

FINN. I can tell him that, surely, and you not giving it out to me at all.

GRANIA. And another thing. Tell him there is no woman but

would be proud, and that oath being broken for her sake. And tell him she is better pleased than if she was a queen of the queens of the world, that she, a travelling woman going out under the weather, can turn her back on him this day as she did in the time that is past. Go now, and give that message if you dare to give it, and keep those words red scorched in your mind.

FINN. I will bring that message, sure enough, and there will be no fear on me giving it out. For all the world knows Finn never took revenge on a fool, or a messenger, or a hound. But it would be well for them that send it to bear in mind that he is a hard man—a hard man—a hard man, surely. As hard as a barren stepmother's slap, or a highway ganders' gob.

GRANIA. Go, go on your road. Or will you take food and drink before you go?

FINN. Not at all, I will eat in no man's house or in any place at all, unless in the bats' feeding time and the owls', the way the terror of my face will not be seen. I will be going now, going my road. But, let you mind yourself. Finn does be very wicked the time he does be mad vexed. And he is a man well used to get the mastery, and any that think to go daring him, or to go against him, he will make split marrow of their bones.

DIARMUID (*looking up*). There might kindness grow in him yet. It is not big men, the like of him, keep up enmity and a grudge for ever.

FINN. Who can know, who can know? Finn has a long memory. There is Grania he doted down on, and that was robbed from him, and he never threw an eye on any woman since and never will, but going as if crazed, and ransacking the whole country after her. As restless as the moon of Heaven he is, and at some times as wasted and as pale.

GRANIA. It is time for him to leave thinking about her.

FINN. A great memory he has and great patience, and a strong fit of the jealous, that is the worst thing ever came from the skies. How well he never forgave and never will forgive Diarmuid O'Duibhne, that he reared on his knee and nourished with every marrow-bone, and that stole away his wife from him, and is dead.

GRANIA. That is no true story. Diarmuid is not dead, but living!

FINN. That's my hearing of the thing. And if he is on the earth yet, what is he doing? Would you call that living? Screening himself behind bushes, running before the rustling of a wren on the nest. In dread to face his master or the old companions that he had.

GRANIA. There is no man but must go through trouble at some

time; and many a good man has been a stranger and an exile through a great share of his lifetime.

FINN. I am no friend to Diarmuid O'Duibhne. But he to be my friend, I would think it a great slur upon him it being said a man that had so great a name was satisfied and content, killing hares and conies for the supper, casting at cranes for sport, or for feathers to stuff a pillow for his sweetheart's head, the time there is an army of the men of Foreign in Ireland.

GRANIA. I can tell you it will not be long till he will be seen going out against them, and going against some that are not foreign, and he having an army of his own.

FINN. It is best for him make no delay so, where they are doing every whole thing to drag the country down.

DIARMUID (*standing up*). I will go out and fight. I will delay no minute.

GRANIA. No, but do as I tell you. Gather your friends till you can make your own stand. Where is the use of one man only, however good he may be?

FINN. A queer thing indeed, no queerer. Diarmuid, that was the third best man of the whole of the armies of the Fenians, to be plucking and sorting pigeon's feathers to settle out a pillow and a bed.

DIARMUID. I will go as I am, by myself. There is no man living would let his name lie under reproach as my name is under it.

GRANIA (*to* FINN). Go quick—you have brought messages—bring another message for me, now, to the High King's house at Tara.

DIARMUID. I will wait for no man's help. I will go.

GRANIA. Is it that you will leave me? It is certain Finn has tracked us—we have stopped too long in the one place. If Finn is there his strength will be there. Do not leave me here alone to the power and the treachery of Finn! It is in at this door he may be coming before the fall of night.

DIARMUID. I will stop here. I will not leave you under Finn's power for any satisfaction to myself. (*To* FINN) Go, as you are bidden, and bring help from the King at Tara.

FINN. Very good, very good. That now is the message of a wise housekeeping husband.

DIARMUID. I give my word it needs more courage at some times to be careful than to be forward and daring, and that is the way with me now.

FINN. Maybe so, maybe so. And there is no wonder at all a com-

mon man to be tame and timid, when Diarmuid, grandson of Duibhne has a faint miserable heart.

DIARMUID. That is the wicked lie of some old enemy.

FINN (*going to door*). Very likely, very likely; but maybe it would be better for Grania I was speaking of, to have stopped with the old man that made much of her, in place of going with the young man that belittles her.

GRANIA. That is a slander and no true word.

FINN (*at door*). Ha! Ha! Ha! It is a story makes great sport among gentle and simple in every place. It is great laughing is given out when the story is heard, that the King of Foreign put his arms about Grania's neck that is as white as a hound's tooth, and that Diarmuid saw him do it—and that the King of Foreign is living yet, and goes boasting on his road! (*Goes out.*)

DIARMUID (*fastening on sword*). Give that to me. (*Points to spear.*)

GRANIA (*throwing it from her*). Oh, stop with me, my darling, and my love, do not go from me now or forsake me! And to stay in the lonely woods for ever or in any far desolate place, you will never hear a cross word or an angry word from me again. And it is for you I will wear my jewels and my golden dress. For you are my share of life, and you are the east and the west to me, and all the long ago and all that is before me! And there is nothing will come between us or part us, and there will be no name but yours upon my lips, and no name but my own spoken by your lips, and the two of us well contented for ever!

FINN (*comes back and looks in at door*). It is what they were saying a while ago, the King of Foreign is grunting and sighing, grunting and sighing, around and about the big red sally tree beside the stream! (*He disappears.* DIARMUID *rushes out.*)

Curtain.

Act III

[*Afternoon of the same day*]

Scene. *In the same tent.* Grania *has put on her golden dress and jewels, and is plaiting gold into her hair. Horns and music suddenly heard, not very near. She goes startled to door, and falls back as* Finn *comes in. He is dressed as if for war and has his banner in his hand. He looks older and more worn than in the First Act.*

Finn. I have overtaken you at last, Grania.

Grania. Finn! It is Finn! (*She goes a step back and takes up a spear.*)

Finn. It would be no great load upon you to bid me welcome.

Grania. What is it has brought you here?

Finn. Foolishness brought me here, and nature.

Grania. It is foolishness for a man not to stop and mind his own estate.

Finn. A wild bird of a hawk I had, that went out of my hand. I am entitled to it by honest law.

Grania. I know your meaning well. But hearken now and put yourself in a better mind. It is a heavy punishment you put upon us these many years, and it is short till we'll all be in the grave, and it is as good for you leave us to go our own road.

Finn. A queer long way I would have walked for no profit. Diarmuid is gone out from you. There is nothing to hinder me from bringing you away.

Grania. There is such a thing.

Finn. Is it your own weak hand on that spear?

Grania (*throwing it down*). No, but your own pride, if it has not gone from you and left you snapping and angry, like any moon-crazed dog.

Finn. If there is madness within me, it is you yourself have a right to answer for it. But for all that, it is truth you are speaking, and I will not bring you away, without you will come with me of your own will.

Grania. That will be when the rivers run backward.

FINN. No, but when the tide is at the turn. I tell you, my love that was allotted and foreshadowed before the making of the world will drag you in spite of yourself, as the moon above drags the waves, and they grumbling through the pebbles as they come, and making their own little moaning of discontent.

GRANIA. You have failed up to this to drag or to lead me to you.

FINN. There is great space for rememberings and regrettings in the days and the nights of seven years.

GRANIA. I and Diarmuid stopped close to one another all that time, and being as we were without hearth or frolic, or welcome or the faces of friends.

FINN. Many a day goes by, and nothing has happened in it worth while. And then there comes a day that is as if the ring of life, and that holds all the joy and the pain of life between its two darknesses. And I am thinking that day has come, and that it will put you on the road to myself and Almhuin.

GRANIA. You think I will give in to you because I am poor in the world. But there is grief in my heart I not to have strength to drive that spear through you, and be quit of your talk forever.

FINN. Would you think better of me if I had been satisfied to put this crown on some other woman's head, and it having rested upon your own for one moment of time? (*Takes crown from under his cloak and holds it up.*)

GRANIA. It would have been best. I would be well pleased to see you do it yet.

FINN. But I would not do that to gain the whole world entirely. And I to have my youth seven times over, it is after you I would come searching those seven times. And I have my life spent and wasted following you, and I have kissed the sign of your foot in every place all through Ireland.

GRANIA. I have no forgiveness for you that have been a red enemy to my darling and my man. I have too long a memory of all the unkindness you have done.

FINN. It is your fault if I did them. Every time the thought of kindness came to me, the thought of you came with it, and put like a ring of iron around my heart.

GRANIA. It is turned to iron indeed. And listen to me now, Finn, and believe what I say. You to have hunted us through crags and bushes, and sent us out in the height of hailstones and of rain, I might overlook it and give you pardon. But it is the malice you showed, putting a hedge between myself and Diarmuid that I never will forgive, but will keep it against you for ever. For it is you left

my life barren, and it was you came between us two through all the years.

FINN. I did right doing that. There is no man but would keep the woman he is to wed for himself only.

GRANIA. It was your shadow was between us through all that time, and if I carry hatred towards you, I leave it on your own head. And it is little I would have thought of hardships, and we two being lovers and alone. But that is not the way it was. For the time he would come in, sweaty and sorefooted from the hunting, or would be dull and drowsy from the nights of watching at the door, I would be down-hearted and crabbed maybe; or if I was kind itself, it would be like a woman would be humouring a youngster, and her mind on some other track. But we to have a settled home and children to be fondling, that would not have been the way with us, and the day would have been short, and we showing them off to one another, and laying down there was no one worthy to have called them into the world but only our two selves.

FINN. You are saying what is not true, and what you have no right to say. But you know well and you cannot deny it, you are man and wife to one another this day.

GRANIA. And if we are, it is not the same as a marriage on that day we left Almhuin would have been. It was you put him under a promise and a bond that was against nature, and he was a fool to make it, and a worse fool to keep it. And what are any words at all put against the love of a young woman and a young man? It was you turned my life to weariness, and my heart to bitterness, and put me under the laughter and the scorn of all. For there was not a poor man's house where we lodged, but I could see wonder and mockery and pity in the eyes of the woman of the house, where she saw that poor as she was, and ugly maybe and ragged, a king's daughter was thought less of than herself. Because if Diarmuid never left his watch upon my threshold, he never came across it, or never gave me the joy and pride of a wife! And it was you did that on me, and I leave it on your own head; and if there is any hatred to be found in the world, and it to be squeezed into one cup only, it would not be so black and so bitter as my own hatred for you!

FINN. That hatred is as if crushed out of the great bulk of my love for you, that is heaped from the earth to the skies.

GRANIA. I am not asking it or in need of it. Why would I listen to a story I have heard often and too often.

FINN. But you will listen, and you will give heed to it. You came

of your own free will to Almhuin to be my wife. And my heart went out to you there and then, and I thought there would be the one house between us, and that it was my child I would see reared on your knee. And that was known to every one of my people and of my armies, and you were willing it should be known. And after that, was it a little thing that all Ireland could laugh at the story that I, Finn, was so spent, and withered, and loathsome in a woman's eyes, that she would not stop with me in a life that was full and easy, but ran out from me to travel the roads, the same as any beggar having seven bags. And I am not like a man of the mean people, that can hide his grief and his heart-break, bringing it to some district where he is not known, but I must live under that wrong and that insult in full sight of all, and among mockery and malicious whisperings in the mouth of those maybe that are shouting me!

GRANIA. I have a great wrong done to you, surely, but it brings me no nearer to you now. And our life is settled, and let us each go our own course.

FINN. Is it not a great wonder the candle you lighted not to have been quenched in all that time? But the light in your grey eyes is my desire for ever, and I am pulled here and there over hills and through hollows. For my life was as if cut in two halves on that night that put me to and fro; and the half that was full and flowing was put behind me, and it has been all on the ebb since then. But you and I together could have changed the world entirely, and put a curb upon the spring-tide, and bound the seven elements with our strength. And now, that is not the way I am, but dragging there and hither, my feet wounded with thorns, the tracks of tears down my cheeks; not taking rest on the brink of any thick wood, because you yourself might be in it, and not stopping on the near side of any lake or inver because you might be on the far side; as wakeful as a herd in lambing time, my companions stealing away from me, being tired with the one corn-crake cry upon my lips always, that is, Grania. And it is no wonder the people to hate you, and but for dread of me they would many a time have killed you.

GRANIA. If I did you wrong, did I do no wrong against Diarmuid? And all the time we were together he never cast it up against me that it was I brought him away from his comrades, or, as he could have done, that I asked him without waiting for his asking. He never put reproaches on me, as you are reproaching me, now that I am alone and without any friend at hand.

FINN. Diarmuid has no harm in his heart, and he would find it

hard to do anything was not mannerly, and befitting a man reared in king's houses, if he is no good lover itself.

GRANIA. Diarmuid that gave all up for love is the best lover of the whole world.

FINN. No, for his love is not worth a reed of straw beside mine.

GRANIA. His love knows no weakening at all. He would begrudge me to walk the road! Listen to this now. The King of Foreign had put his arms about me—he had left but one kiss on my mouth—and for that much Diarmuid is gone out at this time to take his life!

FINN. Diarmuid to be a good lover, it is my own life he would have shortened. If he had any great love for you, it is I myself he would not have left living.

GRANIA. You are belittling Diarmuid, and I will judge you by your own words. You boast that you are a better lover. Then why are you wasting talk here, and you having let him go out of your hand to-day?

FINN. He is not gone out of reach of my hand.

GRANIA. He is! He is safe and gone from you. Would I have been so daring in talk, and I not certain of that?

FINN. It is hard for any man to escape the thing was laid down for him, and that he has earned.

GRANIA. It is no friend of yours he went out fighting. It is that foreign king. He will be well able to put him down.

FINN. It is not a man weakened with love that goes out to win in a fight. It is a foreign hand will do judgment upon him, but it was I myself sent him out to that judgment.

GRANIA. That is not true! It is a boast and a bragging you are making to threaten me. You would never dare to do it. He is of your own blood.

FINN. You are beautiful and I am old and scarred. But if it was different, and I to be what I was, straight as a flag-flower, and yellow-haired, and you what the common people call out that hate you, wide and low-born, a hedgehog, an ugly thing, I would kill any man at all that would come between us, because you are my share of the world and because I love you.

GRANIA. You are speaking lies—I know it is a lie and that it was not you sent him out to that fight. It was not you, it was that sharp-tongued beggar, that spiteful crippled man.

FINN. There is no man only a lover, can be a beggar, and not ashamed.

GRANIA. It was not you—you were not that cripple.

FINN. This is the hand where you put the broken bread.

GRANIA. It was you sent Diarmuid out! It was you came between us! It was you parted us! It was your voice he obeyed and listened to, the time he had no ears for me! Are you between us always?—I will go out after him, I will call him back—I will tell him your treachery—he will make an end of it and of you. He will know you through and through this time. It will fail you to come between us again.

(*A heavy shout is heard.*)

FINN. Hush, and listen! (*Goes to the door.*)

GRANIA. What is it? Let me find Diarmuid——

FINN (*holding her back*). It is Diarmuid is coming in.

(DIARMUID'S *body is carried in by two fair-haired* YOUNG MEN. *They lay it on the bed and take off their caps.* FINN *looks at him, takes his hand, then lays it down and turns away.*)

Death and the judgment of death have overtaken him.

GRANIA (*bending over him*). Oh, Diarmuid, you are not dead! You cannot be dead! It is not in this hour you could die, and all well between us, and all done away with that had parted us!

FINN. He is dead indeed. Look at that wound in his neck. He is bleeding and destroyed with blood.

GRANIA. Come back to me, come back, my heart's darling, my one love of the men of the world! Come back, if but for one moment of time. Come back, and listen to all I have to tell. And it is well we have the world earned, and is it not a hard thing, a young man to die because of any woman at all casting an eye on him, and making him her choice, and bringing her own bad luck upon him, that was marked down for her maybe in the time before the world. And it is hunger I gave you through my love, and it is a pity it is around you it was cast, and it is a pity now, you to be loosed out of it. And it would have been better for you, some girl of the ducks and ashes, hard reared and rough, to have settled out your pillow, and not myself that brought ill-will upon you, and the readying of your grave!

FINN. Where is the use of calling to him and making an outcry? He can hear no word at all, or understand anything you say. And he has brought with him a good memory of happiness and of love; and some of the world's great men bringing with them but empty thoughts of a life that was blasted and barren.

GRANIA. Ochone, my grief! For all is at an end, and you are clean wheat ground and bruised and broken between two hard

stones, the luckless love of a woman, and the love turned to anger of a friend.

FINN (*putting his hand on her arm*). That is enough. A red death is a clean death, and the thing that is done cannot be undone, and the story is ended, and there is no other word to say.

GRANIA (*pushing him away*). You stood between us long enough and he living, but you cannot come between us and he dead! And I own him from this time any way, and I am glad and could nearly laugh, knowing your power is spent and run out, and that it will fail you to come meddling any more between us that are lovers now to the end!

FINN. Your bitter words are no matter. There is no one to give heed to them.

GRANIA. It is well I will keen him, and I never will quit his grave till such time as the one flagstone will cover the two of us from the envious eyes of the women of Ireland and from your own. And a woman to lose her comrade, she loses with him her crown! And let you go to some other place, Finn, for you have nothing to say to him at all, and no other hand will be laid on him from this out but my own!

FINN (*bending over him*). He is not dead—his lips are stirring—there is a little blush in his face——

GRANIA (*stooping*). Oh, Diarmuid, are you come back to me? (*He moves.*) Speak to me now. Lift now your lips to my own—hush! He is going to speak. Oh, Diarmuid, my darling, give me one word!

DIARMUID (*turns his head slightly and looks at* FINN). Is that you, my master, Finn? I did not know you were dead along with me.

GRANIA. You are not dead, you are living—my arms are about you. This is my kiss upon your cheek. (*Kisses him.*)

DIARMUID (*not noticing her*). The King of Foreign is dead. I struck him down by the sally tree—as he was falling he struck at me, and the life went out of me. But what way did you meet with your death, my master Finn?

GRANIA. You are living I say—turn towards me. I am Grania, your wife.

DIARMUID (*still speaking to* FINN). It is a very friendly thing you to have met me here, and it is Ireland and the world should be lonesome after you this day!

GRANIA. Speak to him, Finn. Tell him he is astray. Tell him he is living. Bring the wits back to him.

FINN. Diarmuid, you are not dead, you are in the living world.

GRANIA. Come back, now, come back to life! Finn thought he had sent you to your death, but it failed him—he is treacherous—he is no friend to you. You will know that now. Come back, and leave thinking of him! !

DIARMUID (*still speaking to* FINN). There was some word I had to say meeting you—it is gone—I had it in my mind a while ago.

GRANIA. Do you not see me? It is I myself am here—Grania!

DIARMUID. Some wrong I did you, some thing past forgiving. Is it to forgive me you are waiting here for me, and to tell me you are keeping no anger against me after all?

FINN. Come back now, and put out your strength, and take a good grip of life, and I will give you full forgiveness for all you have done against me. And I will have done with anger, and with jealousy that has been my bedfellow this long time, and I will meddle with you no more, unless in the way of kindness.

DIARMUID. Kindness—you were always kind surely, and I a little lad at your knee. Who at all would be kind to me and you not being kind?

FINN. I will turn back altogether, I will leave you Grania your wife, and all that might come between us from this time.

DIARMUID. What could there be would come between us two? That would be a strange thing indeed.

FINN. I will go, for the madness is as if gone from me; and you are my son and my darling, and it is beyond the power of any woman to put us asunder, or to turn you against me any more.

DIARMUID. That would be a very foolish man would give up his dear master and his friend for any woman at all. (*He laughs.*)

GRANIA. He is laughing—the sense is maybe coming back to him.

DIARMUID. It would be a very foolish thing, any woman at all to have leave to come between yourself and myself. I cannot but laugh at that.

FINN. Rouse yourself up now, and show kindness to the wife that is there at your side.

DIARMUID. There is some noise of the stream where I died. It is in my ears yet—but I remember—I am remembering now—there was something I begrudged you, the time our bodies were heavy about us. Something I brought away from you, and kept from you. What wildness came upon me to make me begrudge it? What was it I brought away from you? Was not Hazel my own hound? (*He dies.*)

FINN. Lift up your head, open your eyes, do not die from me! Come back to me, Diarmuid, now!

GRANIA. He will say no word to either one of us again for ever. (*She goes to wall, leaning her head against it, her hands working.*)

FINN. Are you gone indeed, Diarmuid, that I myself sent to your death? And I would be well pleased it was I, Finn, was this day making clay, and you yourself holding up your head among the armies. It is a bad story for me you to be dead, and it is in your place I would be well satisfied to be this day; and you had not lived out your time. But as to me, I am tired of all around me, and all the weight of the years is come upon me, and there will be no more joy in anything happens from this day out forever. And it is as if all the friends ever I had went to nothing, losing you. (*After a moment's silence he turns to the* YOUNG MEN.) Bring him out now, slaves of Britain, to his comrades and his friends, and the armies that are gathering outside, till they will wake him and mourn him and give him burial, for it is a king is lost from them this day. And if you have no mind to keen him, let you raise a keen for the men of your own country he left dumb in the dust, and a foolish smile on their face. For he was a good man to put down his enemies and the enemies of Ireland, and it is living he would be this day if it was not for his great comeliness and the way he had, that sent every woman stammering after him and coveting him; and it was love of a woman brought him down in the end, and sent him astray in the world. And what at all is love, but lies on the lips and drunkenness, and a bad companion on the road?

(*The body is carried out. The bearers begin to keen. The keen is taken up by the armies outside.* FINN *sits down, his head bowed in his hand.* GRANIA *begins fastening up her hair and as if preparing for a journey.*)

FINN. You are doing well going out to keen after him.

GRANIA. It is not with him I am going. It is not with Diarmuid I am going out. It is an empty thing to be crying the loss of a comrade that banished me from his thoughts, for the sake of any friend at all. It it with you I will go to Almhuin. Diarmuid is no more to me than a sod that has been quenched with the rain.

FINN. I will meddle no more with what belongs to him. You are the dead man's wife.

GRANIA. All the wide earth to come between Diarmuid and myself, it would put us no farther away from one another than what we are. And as for the love I had for him, it is dead now, and turned to be as cold as the snow is out beyond the path of the sun.

FINN. It is the trouble of the day that is preying on you.

GRANIA. He had no love for me at any time. It is easy know it now. I knew it all the while, but I would not give in to believe it. His desire was all the time with you yourself and Almhuin. He let on to be taken up with me, and it was but letting on. Why would I fret after him that so soon forgot his wife, and left her in a wretched way?

FINN. You are not judging him right. You are distracted with the weight of your loss.

GRANIA. Does any man at all speak lies at the very brink of death, or hold any secret in his heart? It was at that time he had done with deceit, and he showed where his thought was, and had no word at all for me that had left the whole world for his sake, and that went wearing out my youth, pushing here and there as far as the course of the stars of Heaven. And my thousand curses upon death not to have taken him at daybreak, and I believing his words! It is then I would have waked him well, and would have cried my seven generations after him! And I have lost all on this side of the world, losing that trust and faith I had, and finding him to think of me no more than of a flock of stairs would cast their shadow on his path. And I to die with this scald upon my heart, it is hard thistles would spring up out of my grave.

FINN. Quiet yourself, for this is grief gone wild and that is beyond all measure.

GRANIA. I to have known that much yesterday I would have left him and would have gone with that King that clutched at me. And I would have said words to Diarmuid would have left a burn and a sting.

FINN. I will call in women to cry with you and to be comforting you.

GRANIA. You are craving to get rid of me now, and to put me away out of your thoughts, the same as Diarmuid did. But I will not go! I will hold you to your word, I will take my revenge on him! He will think to keep your mind filled with himself and to keep me from you,—he will be coming back showing himself as a ghost about Almhuin. He will think to come whispering to you, and you alone in the night time. But he will find me there before him! He will shrink away lonesome and baffled! I will have my turn that time. It is I will be between him and yourself, and will keep him outside of that lodging for ever!

FINN. I gave him my promise I would leave you to him from this out, and I will keep it to him dead, the same as if he was still living.

GRANIA. How well he kept his own promise to you! I will go to Almhuin in spite of you; you will be ashamed to turn me back in the sight of the people, and they having seen your feet grown hard in following and chasing me through the years. It is women are said to change, and they do not, but it is men that change and turn as often as the wheel of the moon. You filled all Ireland with your outcry wanting me, and now, when I am come into your hand, your love is rusted and worn out. It is a pity I that had two men, and three men, killing one another for me an hour ago, to be left as I am, and no one having any use for me at all!

FINN. It is the hardness of trouble is about my heart, and is bringing me down with its weight. And it seems to me to be left alone with December and the bareness of the boughs; and the fret will be on me to the end.

GRANIA. Is it not a strange thing, you, that saw the scores and the hundreds stretched dead, that at the sight of one young man only, you give in to the drowning of age. It is little I will give heed from this out to words or to coaxings, and I have no love to give to any man for ever. But Diarmuid that belittled me will not see me beating my hands beside his grave, showing off to the cranes in the willows, and twisting a mournful cry. It is the thing I will give him to take notice of, a woman that cared nothing at all for his treachery.

FINN. Wait till the months of mourning are at an end, and till your big passion is cold, and do then what you may think fit, and settle out your life, as it is likely there will be another thought in your mind that time. But I am putting no reproach on you, for it is on myself the great blame should be, and from this out I have no more to say to love or friendship or anything but the hard business of the day.

GRANIA. I will not wait. I will give my thoughts no leave to repent. I will give no time to those two slaves to tell out the way I was scorned!

FINN. The men of the armies will laugh and mock at you, seeing you settle out a new wedding in the shadow of your comrade's wake.

GRANIA. There is many a woman lost her lord, and took another, and won great praise in the latter end, and great honour. And why should I be always a widow that went so long a maid? Give me now the crown, till I go out before them, as you offered it often enough. (*She puts it on her head.*) I am going, I am going out now, to show myself before them all, and my hand linked in your own. It is well I brought my golden dress.

FINN. Wait till the darkness of the night, or the dusk of the evening itself.

GRANIA. No, no. Diarmuid might not see me at that time. He might be gone to some other place. He is surely here now, in this room where he parted from the body—he is lingering there by the hearth. Let him see now what I am doing, and that there is no fear on me, or no wavering of the mind. Open the door now for me!

(FINN *opens door and they go to the opening, she taking his hand. There is a mocking laugh heard. She falls back and crouches down.* FINN *tries to raise her.*)

FINN. I thought to leave you and to go from you, and I cannot do it. For we three have been these seven years as if alone in the world; and it was the cruelty and the malice of love made its sport with us, when we thought it was our own way we were taking, driving us here and there, knocking you in between us, like the ball between two goals, and the hurlers being out of sight and beyond the boundaries of the world. And all the three of us have been as if worsted in that play. And now there are but the two of us left, and whether we love or hate one another, it is certain I can never feel love or hatred for any other woman from this out, or you yourself for any other man. And so as to yourself and myself, Grania, we must battle it out to the end.

(FINN *raises her up. A louder peal of laughter is heard.*)

GRANIA (*going towards the door*). It is but the armies that are laughing! I thought I heard Diarmuid's laugh.

FINN. It is his friends in the armies gave out that mocking laugh.

GRANIA. And is it not a poor thing, strong men of the sort to be mocking at a woman has gone through sharp anguish, and the breaking of love, on this day? Open the door again for me. I am no way daunted or afraid. Let them laugh their fill and welcome, and laugh you, Finn, along with them if you have a mind. And what way would it serve me, their praise and their affection to be mine? For there is not since an hour ago any sound would matter at all, or be more to me than the squeaking of bats in the rafters, or the screaming of wild geese overhead!

(*She opens the door herself.* FINN *puts his arm about her. There is another great peal of laughter, but it stops suddenly as she goes out.*)

Curtain.

THE GOLDEN APPLE

PERSONS

THE KING OF IRELAND
SIMON MAOR. *His Steward.*
HIS DOCTOR.
THE WITCH.
PAMPOGUE. *Her Daughter.*
THE GARDENER.
FATACH MOR. *The Giant.*
BRIDGET. *His Wife.*
MUIREANN. *The King of Spain's Daughter.*
RURY. *The King of Ireland's Son.*
THE KING OF SPAIN'S FIVE SONS.
SERVANTS AND GUARDS.

ACT I

SCENE I. *The Witch's garden. A little tree,* CENTRE, *with leaves and blossom and one golden apple. A well before it.* GARDENER *potting plants. He is singing a little song. He bends over well.*

GARDENER. What way is it with you, my poor little five fishes? Looking up to the sunbeams ye are. Is it that ye remember yet the King's Court in Spain? I am thinking ye have sense and memory like any person walking the earth. Are you saying it is long ye are here in the garden, through seven springs of planting and seven summers of growth? (*Sings another verse.*) Have patience now and the young lady your sister will be coming to visit you and to speak to you unknownst to the Witch. Ah, you draw down under the water hearing that word! Is it that you are saying she done Druid tricks on you, changing your shape and bringing you from your country, and the little Tree of Power along with you? It's a pity now some to have too much talk, and ye that are a king's sons having none at all of it. It is likely enough living down in that well ye will grow blind and deaf in the heel. Five little red-mouthed trouts! That is a bad way for a king's sons to be! —— Mind yourselves

now. It's the Witch is after coming from her journey. (*He sings and works.*)

(WITCH *comes on. She is wearing a cloak of badger skins, and a mask with long teeth and a pair of goat's horns.*)

WITCH. What way is the little tree?

GARDENER. The best. I have it well cared. I am after putting a prop to it. If you would not support the head the neck of it would be staggery.

WITCH. Blossom on it and an apple—the golden apple that will cure any sickness at all or any wound.

GARDENER. Well cared I have it; flowery above and not cranky in the stalk the way some trees do be.

WITCH. I have a mind to shift it and to plant it under my own window pane where I can be looking at it every day.

GARDENER. It's best leave it where it is, and not to be combing or rising the roots.

WITCH. It has too much of shades and of shelters. It was used to the country of the sun.

GARDENER. Wait till the month of March comes at it and you'll see it's a great persecuting it will get, and it not to be minded the way it is.

WITCH (*throwing off her cloak and mask*). Hide that under the branches. It is my daughter is coming—— Come hither to me, Pampogue.

PAMPOGUE. You are come back to the garden?

WITCH. I am always glad to come back within its walls.

PAMPOGUE. Walls! So there are enough of walls around us.

WITCH. It is a good shelter for yourself they are as well as for the little tree.

PAMPOGUE. I would sooner be outside whatever way it is, than to be closed up with no company but green plants.

GARDENER. Sure the seed we sowed will soon be flourishing up. There will be roses and posies and every sort that is pretty blooming out all around.

PAMPOGUE. I am seven times tired with the sight of your roses and posies and of the white sun itself going up and going down.

GARDENER. You will not find the seven days of the week too long, and some king's son to come courting you.

PAMPOGUE. It is near time indeed for some one to bring me out from this.

WITCH. Don't be in so great a hurry, child, to go out into the dangers of the world.

PAMPOGUE. You yourself go out gathering news or making news far and wide. It would be more fitting I to be doing that, and you that are up in age to be sitting spinning at the wheel.

WITCH. No, I will not do that. I to begin to give in to age, it is likely it would run through me too quick.

PAMPOGUE. Bring me out with you so. I would like well to travel among neighbours and to go visiting at country houses by the roadside.

WITCH. Have patience, child, for a while.

PAMPOGUE. To be with myself only I'd think the day as long as a year! Where is the benefit of all the power you own, when you cannot get me settled in a good place? It is time for me to be giving out food to company and keeping the keys of a house.

WITCH. I did not see the husband yet I thought to be worthy of you.

PAMPOGUE. You never gave me a sight of any one at all, only the gardener. All the fair-haired men I hear talk of finding comrades on the round world, and I myself hidden from them among trees!

WITCH. It is foretold to me it is love for some man of the round world will put you under trouble and torment. Wait a while, and when the right stars will be up in the heavens I will find you a lucky match.

PAMPOGUE. You are making excuses with your stars! I to have been seen before this I would have my choice of husbands!

WITCH. You have very proud, hardy talk! Is it Splendour, son of the King of the Greeks, you are looking for, or the King of Prussia's son?

PAMPOGUE. You to have given me royal blood it would be easy for me make a match with a king's son.

WITCH. There is not a woman of my race that had not a king under her feet! But as to yourself, I will give you no leave at all to wed with any man of Adam's race.

PAMPOGUE. I heard it said my father was of that breed.

WITCH. If he was, it is on his account I am at war with the whole tribe of men, striving to draw away their life.

PAMPOGUE. If you pleased yourself, why would not I please myself in a man?

WITCH. Do so, and he will leave your heart to walk barefoot over a hard highroad of flints.

PAMPOGUE. Is it that you are looking for some man in the fairies for me? Or gone out of the body? Or one coming from the country Underwave, having a skin the colour of coal?

WITCH. I have no desire to give you up at all. If I had, as to matches, I was offered one but yesterday.

PAMPOGUE. Who was that?

WITCH. Fatach Mor the Giant——

PAMPOGUE. He has a wife of his own.

WITCH. He is but the matchmaker. It is for a friend he came asking, that is coming to his castle looking for a wife.

PAMPOGUE. Has he a good way of living?

WITCH. He has put a rent upon the whole of Scotland. There are some say he has laid it upon the birds of the air.

PAMPOGUE. Is he a natural man?

WITCH. He is nearer to the class of the giants. He is the Grugach of the Humming.

PAMPOGUE. Is he anyway well looking?

WITCH. Middling only. Wait, and I will find you a better match in a quarter or three-quarters of a year.

PAMPOGUE. I'll take him. To see the daffodils sprouting in this place again it would surely bring me to my death. Gardener!

GARDENER (*coming*). What is it?

PAMPOGUE. I'm going out of this! I'm going to make a great match! I will never come inside a garden again, but be driving in carriages through crowded streets.

GARDENER. Is that a fact?

PAMPOGUE (*to* WITCH). You will want to give me some good clothes. Let them be made the same as the King of Spain's daughter had the time you brought her here. A cloak of the colour of the foxglove she had, and roses worked around the hem of her skirt.

GARDENER. So she had. There is nothing left to her now, only her little golden mittens. There was no one but would turn his head to look at her.

PAMPOGUE. There is no one would look at her now. She is nothing at all in her suit of a girl of the ducks and ashes. Get me clothes the same as she had, till I'll show out well.

WITCH (*to* GARDENER). Go, seek some bundles of silks and satins are inside the door of the house. Bring here the serving girl with you. (GARDENER *goes*.) You can make your choice of the dearest sort of silk that is pleasing to you.

PAMPOGUE. Let the girl herself sew the dress for me.

WITCH. She will, and you will become it well. Turn up your hair now and make a ball of it. It is true enough you are grown out of being a child.

(MUIREANN *comes, dressed in tattered sacking, with* GARDENER *who carries bundles.*)

PAMPOGUE. Rinse now the dirt from off your hands, the way they will be fit to handle silk clothes.

MUIREANN (*showing her hands*). They are roughened with the sods and ashes, but they are clean.

WITCH. Look now at these silks that are the grandest nearly in the world. You have to shape and to sew a dress for Pampogue such as they wear at the Court of Spain.

MUIREANN. It is long since I saw a suit of the kind.

WITCH. Put your mind to it now. This dress must be made ready by evening, by the time of the gathering of the crows.

MUIREANN. I think that is not enough of time.

WITCH. That is sluggishness. If the work is not done by then your bed will be the iron harrow.

PAMPOGUE. If it fails her to do this, bid her go clean out the seven cowhouses that never were cleaned for seven years.

MUIREANN. Give me thread and needles.

PAMPOGUE (*to* GARDENER). Give her a few threads from that pound ball that is tied to the stem of the tree.

WITCH. There are needles. Have a care of them. My father gave me the full of a ship of them, and I lost none and broke none and there are but those five left, where they are all worn out sewing and making and mending my clothes. (*She goes.*)

PAMPOGUE (*watches girl work. Takes up scissors*). What call has a girl carrying turf and herding geese to have on her such a head of hair? (*Snips a lock from it.*) There! (*Throws it on grass.*) The birds will take it to be hemp or oakum and will carry it away, lining their nests. (*She tries to cut another lock.*)

MUIREANN. Do not touch it! If I am poor in the world to-day, it was a queen was used to smooth out that hair.

PAMPOGUE. It is much if I leave you your golden mittens.

MUIREANN. It is only my hand they will fit.

PAMPOGUE. Be civil now and mannerly and maybe I will bring you to attend me and sew my clothes where I am getting a great match out in Scotland.

MUIREANN. I was brought to this place by the power and the spells of the witch that is your mother. It is all one to me where I go, or do not go, as long as I am not free from that power.

PAMPOGUE. You are loth to leave your little brothers maybe in the well.

MUIREANN. There is no one in this place under sorrow but only themselves and myself.

PAMPOGUE. Give me a thread of your threads.

MUIREANN. Here it is, and a needle.

PAMPOGUE. No, it is a pin I am wanting. Here now is one. I will crooken it and put a berry on it and go fishing for pinkeens in the well. There is nothing at all in the fashion, they were telling me, but gloves made of the skin of a fish.

MUIREANN (*jumping up and seizing thread*). You will get no leave to do that! The witch herself will get no leave to do it! Go away out of this!

PAMPOGUE (*spitefully and frightened*). There now, you have the five needles lost! I will go tell of you that through crossness and through spite you cast them down into the well. You will surely be sent cleaning out the seven cowsheds! (*Goes.*)

MUIREANN. My grief and my sorrow!

GARDENER (*coming forward*). That one would spit out poison would wither up the grass!

MUIREANN. Did you hear her tormenting me?

GARDENER. I did. I'd sooner a venomous mist to come and to slaughter the crops. She's as cross as a bag of weasels.

MUIREANN. She threatened to cast down her line and her hook, and I started, and lost the Witch's needles in the well!

GARDENER. That she may be worse this day twelvemonth!

MUIREANN. I cannot get a view of them at all. They are stuck down in the sand and in the stones.

GARDENER. That herself and all belonging to her may wither off the face of the earth!

MUIREANN (*with a shout of joy*). They have brought them back to me! My needles! Every one of the five little fishes put up his head, and he having a needle in his mouth!

GARDENER. Is that a fact?

MUIREANN. Aren't those now the good little brothers? By and by when the work is ended I will play a little tune to you, that we used to hear in our father's house.

GARDENER. It is a hard thing you to be left to the kindness of fishes. It is a king's son in his own shape should be coming to your aid.

MUIREANN (*standing up*). It is near the fall of evening. Look at the flight of the wild ducks across the sky. (*A sound of cawing.*) There now are the crows gathering to the high elms.

GARDENER. Whisht! They travel far. I am listening to their news of the world.

MUIREANN. I am lost now and destroyed. I have made no way at all with the work. The Witch will show no kindness. She will put trouble and hardship on me through the night. But I will not give in to her to shed tears or to give out any cry at all! (GARDENER *laughs.*)

MUIREANN. It is a bad time you chose for laughing!

GARDENER. There is many a one would laugh, having knowledge of the talk of the birds.

MUIREANN. Teach it to me so.

GARDENER. I will do that. I learned it from a blue hawk that was my grandmother.

MUIREANN. A while ago there was no one would laugh, the time I would be under any of the little troubles of a child.

GARDENER. There is news will set a man laughing at any time because he knows it will turn to good.

MUIREANN. Is it news that will help my case?

GARDENER. It is. It is news of a dying king. (*He goes off singing his little song.*)

(MUIREANN *sits down and sews desperately.* GARDENER *comes back dressed as a ragged messenger with broken breeches and tattered shoes, his ears sticking through his cap.*)

GARDENER. I am going a journey.

MUIREANN. Oh, bring me along with you! Bring me away from the Witch's garden!

GARDENER. It would be no use. You cannot stir unknownst to her.

MUIREANN. I would run fast, very fast.

GARDENER. Old as she is, she is as supple-walking in her limbs as a young girl.

MUIREANN. I could hide.

GARDENER. You could not. She is a very fierce woman. There is not a wall in any part would keep you safe from her rage.

MUIREANN. There is no help for me so.

GARDENER. It is time for me get it for you.

MUIREANN. What way can you travel so far?

GARDENER. I didn't live these seven years under a witch without learning some of her trade. There are wild geese on the wing tonight. It is along with them I will go.

MUIREANN. Oh, will you save me out of this!

GARDENER. I promise you that. I give you as bail the four quar-

ters of the heavens and of the sea and of the land against my own body and my soul! (*Goes.*)

(WITCH *and daughter come in.*)

WITCH. Where are the needles I gave you?

MUIREANN. They are here. I am sewing with one. The rest are stuck in my mitten.

WITCH (*to* PAMPOGUE). You deceived me, saying she had lost them, and bringing me here from my rest that I was in need of, where the day was long on me.

PAMPOGUE. She has not the sewing near done. Send her to clean out the seven sheds.

WITCH. Keep quiet. I am tired with your peevishness. I will listen to no more of your talk. Mind yourself, girl! I will let you off punishment to-night, but the rods will be ripe and ready for you to-morrow!

(WITCH *and* DAUGHTER *go.*)

(MUIREANN *takes her little silver pipe, bends over well, and plays "The little old mud cabin by the hill."*)

SCENE II. *A room in the Court of the King of Ireland. The* KING *lying on a bed.* DOCTOR *sitting beside him.* SERVANTS. SIMON MAOR *comes in and looks at him.*

SIMON. Is there life in the King yet?

DOCTOR. There is, but hardly.

SIMON. He shrunk greatly in the days past. He reduced very much in the face.

DOCTOR. No wonder in that, and he lying on the bed through the three quarters of the year. He never made a laugh since he was in it. It is a heavy wound he got.

SIMON. It was bad to him to be beat in the battle. And his seven packs of hounds at the same time to be swept from him and lost.

DOCTOR. It was worse to him, the two eldest sons to be killed in the same fight where he got the wound.

SIMON. The son that is left to him is worth the whole of them.

DOCTOR. He's not much. It's hard lead him. The father himself is more apt to take my counsel and advice. It is long till he will be fitting to be King.

SIMON. It is not long till he will be that. That old remnant in the bed lost a power of money over you, but there isn't left of him now

but the same as a shadow in a bottle. Not an ounce of flesh on him, but only skin and bones.

DOCTOR. He would be a great loss to Ireland. I might bring him around yet.

SIMON. It would maybe give him relief to quit the world. To die in your bed is the safest death. It would be nearly a pity he not to go, and all prepared so nice.

(A SERVANT *brings in a sheepskin.*)

DOCTOR. Give that to me. (*He takes skin and begins to wrap it round* KING.)

SIMON. What skin is that?

DOCTOR. The skin of a sheep that is after being killed, fresh and warm. I am about to wrap it about his body. It might put some heat into his blood.

SIMON. Whose orders were those to go killing a sheep?

DOCTOR. My own orders, as the King's doctor.

SIMON. If you are itself, I am the King's steward. I will bear no meddling with my flocks.

DOCTOR. I will meddle and have a right to meddle, where it is for the service of the King.

SIMON. Out of what flock did they go bring it?

DOCTOR. Tush! What way would I know? A sheep is a sheep—a four-footed beast in the field, and mutton when it is served on the table. When it is but the skin I am in need of, it makes no difference what sort they will go kill.

SIMON. It makes a big differ to myself. A doctor that is stuck in the house has no call to interfere with the stock. Let me see now, did you take one of the culled ewes I have ready for October fair, or the wethers I am fattening against Shrove? (*Pulls at sheepskin.*)

DOCTOR. Don't be stirring it now, letting in the draught.

SIMON. I wouldn't begrudge a horny hogget from the mountain; a hardy class that go foraging on furze and heath.

DOCTOR. I tell you I don't care what it is so long as it has warmth within it, and a weighty fleece.

SIMON. A weighty fleece! (*Feels it.*) Have a care is it my Ormond ram!

DOCTOR. I'll tell the King on you, and that you begrudge him his own.

SIMON. I'll tell the King's son you went killing and destroying what will be *his* own! It's likely it will not be *this* King will be reckoning the lambs' tails next Easter!

DOCTOR. He might not be as near it as you think.

SIMON. Signs are he might. It's the world will be changing around you. I tell you a true word, it is not everybody would drink *your* medicines!

DOCTOR. Go on now till he'll hear you! He is wakening.

(KING *feebly stirs.*)

SIMON. There is hot stones on the hearth. Wait till I will put them to his feet. (*He brings stones and puts them at end of bed.*)

KING. Where is Rury, my son ?

DOCTOR. Out hurling, I suppose; or fowling with his horse and his dog.

SIMON. He never was far out in the country since the bad turn came, but around the gardens and the house.

KING. Send out looking for him. He is all the son that I have.

SIMON. And you are all the father he ever had. He dotes down on yourself.

DOCTOR. It is natural a young lad to be sporting and rambling.

SIMON. You know well that through the night time, and the King sleeping, he was sitting by the brink of the bed.

DOCTOR. If the King would charge myself with any message to him, or any commands as to his behaviour, there would no mistake be made.

KING. Is it certain I am going out?

DOCTOR. I am striving to keep the life in you. I have death baulked and baffled up to this. I have kept him back from the pillow, but he is at the foot of the bed.

(*A horn heard.*)

KING. What is that?

SIMON. It is the big horn is at the grand gate. It is long since it was sounded out before.

DOCTOR. It is likely it is some king sending to ask news of your health.

KING. A king is it?

DOCTOR. I would say by the sound it is one of the big men of the world.

KING. Put me sitting up against the pillow.

(DOCTOR *and* SIMON *raise him.*)

DOCTOR. Take care would you let him slip down!

KING. What is this you have put around me?

DOCTOR. The skin of a sheep newly killed.

KING (*with a roar*). Is it that you thought me to be dead that you dared to dress me up as a sheep? Is that the way you have made me a fool of so soon as you thought my senses to be gone?

DOCTOR. It was the skin that brought you around.

SIMON. It was not, but the hot stones.

KING. A sheepskin! Had you no lion from the Eastern World to go skin, or a bull itself would be sending out challenges, tearing up the sod with his horns?

DOCTOR. I thought to be doing what was right.

KING. Let ye put some face upon my bed! Kings do not die like flies in a heap, one the same as another. Every king has a separate death, and should have it! How would you know what time it would be put in a story or a song?

(*They arrange armour and rough skins about his bed.*)

DOCTOR. Here is the big shield, the Wheel of Battle. I will put it beside your hand.

KING. Let in now the king or the king's messenger that is come maybe from Arthur of Britain or from the Crown of France.

(*Door is opened and* GARDENER *appears in his dress as a ragged man.*)

Who is that?

DOCTOR. A ragged green man!

SIMON. Broken breeches on him, and puddle water in his shoes.

DOCTOR. Turn him out!

SIMON. Put him out the door!

KING. Let the crows make their supper of him to-night!

(ALL *push him towards door.* RURY *appears coming in and pushes him back.*)

DOCTOR. Who is stopping him?

SIMON. It is Rury, the King's son.

RURY. He is a messenger. He has the right to give his message.

GARDENER. I have an advice to give.

KING. Is it sent by a comrade king?

GARDENER. It is not.

DOCTOR. Are you doctor to any king?

GARDENER. I am not.

SIMON. Or steward to any king?

GARDENER. I am not.

SIMON. Then you have no word that is worth saying.

RURY. Let him speak.

GARDENER. The birdeens of the air brought word where I was, that the King of Ireland is all but in the grip of death.

DOCTOR. It is no wonder the birds themselves to be crying him.

GARDENER. It is not crying or keening they were, but laughing.

KING. What is he saying?

GARDENER. Laughing to think there is a great king going out, and he not sending some messenger to the lucky apple tree in that place.

RURY. What way would that help him?

GARDENER. The cure of the world is in it. There is a golden apple of that tree would raise a man it had failed all the doctors to rise.

RURY. Is that a true story?

GARDENER. It's as true as I'm telling you. To make a sound man of him it would, and to give him lengthening of life.

KING. It is hard to believe it at all.

DOCTOR. With all the cures I am doing through the years I never heard of it.

SIMON. Who is it owns the apple?

GARDENER. It is owned presently by the Witch that is called in Ireland the Hag of Slaughter, that has it robbed from the Royalty of Spain.

RURY. Is it east or west the garden is?

GARDENER. It is not knowledge of the roads will bring you to that far foreign place that is called Garrdin-dearead-an-domhain, the Garden at the World's End.

(RURY *goes aside, puts on cloak, takes up and tries some weapons.*)

KING. It should be a long way off.

GARDENER. To go for the apple and to get the apple and to bring it to this place would need the length of a year and a day.

SIMON. Will the King last out that long?

DOCTOR. I'll engage to keep him for that time through the power of my physic, that is maybe as good as apples in the heel.

KING. If you do not, I will leave it in my will, every doctor in Ireland to be hanged!

SIMON. And who now will go look for the apple?

GARDENER. It is a man having courage should do that. There is a giant in the way, Fatach Mor. There is danger in passing by his house.

SIMON. I wouldn't think much of giants; I never heard of a giant having stock enough to keep a steward, or a herd itself, employed.

GARDENER. There are the tricks of the Hag of Slaughter.

SIMON. The people do be full of stories of her. But I never could be in dread of a witch.

GARDENER. There is the Wood of Wonders to be passed, that is full of monsters and of shadow-shapes.

SIMON. I never would believe in that sort. I am going about through the dark night every lambing time, and I never met with anything worse than myself.

GARDENER. There is the Hill of Fire to be crossed that sends up a blast of flame; and the Mountain of Spearheads that are sticking up through the ground.

SIMON. It is the one in charge of the King's health should go in search of what will stiffen out his life. We reckon the doctor that much use.

KING. Let him go so without delay.

DOCTOR. It would fail me to do it in the time. I am no good stepper on the road, let alone upon spearheads and fiery flames. I am too far out in years.

SIMON. It is lively it will make you. There is no one rightly young, only those that will travel.

DOCTOR. Send out the captains of the King's army.

KING. They have no drill or preparation to protect them against unnatural things.

SIMON. The Witch to change them into grasshoppers they would be crushed under the weight of their armour—and they to shrink so much in bulk!

DOCTOR. Let you yourself go, where you are making a mock of danger.

SIMON. Is it I myself? What about my hay? My stacks? My haggard? With the milk to be regulated and all the cows that are about to calve!

DOCTOR. You are in dread of the Giant and the Witch.

SIMON. I am not. But I am loth to meddle with apples after what happened in Adam's Paradise. (KING *sinks back.*)

DOCTOR (*to the* SERVANTS). It's as good for you lay out the sheets.

RURY (*coming forward and speaking to* SIMON). Take good care of my white greyhound till I come back. You may put out the horses at grass.

SIMON. Where is it you are going?

RURY. Keep in the red colt through the heat of the day. He goes crazy when the flies come around him.

KING. You are not going away, Rury?

RURY. I will be back in a year and a day.

SIMON. Is it that you are going for the apple?

KING. You cannot go. It is not according to right rule the heir

to go, and the King himself not having strength in his hand to notch his name or his command upon a stick.

DOCTOR. It is right he should go. Everything that can be done should be done to save the King's life.

SIMON. Is it that you have it in your mind to make him banish the son?

KING. I crave and command you not to go into those dangers.

RURY. Who would not to hell for a cure if one belonging to him was sick?

SIMON. Hasn't the lad great courage?

KING. I will not let you go! You that have always earned my blessing and that never have earned my curse.

RURY. Keep your heart up and rouse yourself, and you won't feel the year passing. For the latter end of the world to be to-morrow, I would go out in the same way.

KING. Do not let him out the door! He will never bring his life away out of all that!

SIMON. You would as easy put a gad around sand, or keep a hold of a sunbeam in your fist.

KING. His two brothers went out laughing, and it was to meet with their death.

SIMON. And he not knowing so much as where is the garden!

RURY. If it isn't in the east I'll go west, and if it isn't in the west I'll go south, and from that again to the north! I will not eat two meals in the one place or sleep two nights in the one bed till I will bring back the cure for your healing!

SIMON. Take comfort, King. I myself will go with him for to take charge of him on the road.

DOCTOR. That's right. The King will give you the lend of him, Rury, for the length of a year and a day.

SIMON. I will walk every whole step of Ireland, but I'll bring him back safe and sound!

KING. Lift the flagstone from the hearth and give him out the sword was cooled with three drops of lions' blood.

SIMON. Ask him along with that to give you the costs of the road. (KING *points to a purse, and* DOCTOR *gives it to* SIMON.) I leave it on the King this is travelling charges, and should not be put to my account as steward.

RURY. The messenger is gone. We must overtake him, till we learn what way we should make our start for the Garden at the World's End!

SIMON (*to the* GUARD). Let you strike up now, boys, the "Shan van voght"!

(*March played. They go out. The* KING *sinks back weeping.* DOCTOR *stands over him.*)

SCENE III. *The Wood of Wonders. An open space. Evening darkening.* WITCH *and* PAMPOGUE *come in with branches.*

PAMPOGUE. Is this what they call the round world? It is a lonely looking sort of a place.

WITCH. You gave me no rest till I would bring you with me, and now you are not content.

PAMPOGUE. What made you choose this wild spot?

WITCH. It is best for the work I have to do.

PAMPOGUE. You didn't tell me yet what is that work.

WITCH. A thief that is coming the road to bring away the apple from the garden. What I have to do is to put him backward.

PAMPOGUE. What ails you that you cannot rise up in the air like a mist and come down and turn him into a green stone?

WITCH. We have our own way to contend with. There are some things it is hard for me to touch.

PAMPOGUE. They give out you have power over all things.

WITCH. I am under orders like the rest. There is an order that we cannot meddle with the royal blood of Ireland, that is protected since the time of the Danes; unless it will come into our power through fear or through tasting our food.

PAMPOGUE. Is it one of that blood is coming the road?

WITCH. Not at all—not at all—just a thief, a pair of robbers. It will be easy frighten them, putting these branches around them, that they will think themselves to be in a wood. (*She makes branches into bundles.*) To drive the wits from them with fear, that will be best of all. I will raise a sound in the air, they will think it to be a storm of wind.

PAMPOGUE. Give me some branches to be shaking at them. I will flutter up my apron till they will feel a blast.

WITCH. Do not. To hear the sound of wind and not to feel it would put more dread into the heart.

PAMPOGUE. What made you gather that bag of rush cotton?

WITCH. We will make with it the appearance of snow.

PAMPOGUE. What at all are you putting around you? I never saw that ugly dress.

WITCH (*putting on badger skin, cloak, and mask*). That is the way the men of the earth have me pictured. The skin of badgers around me and two goats' horns going out through my head.

PAMPOGUE. I would not like to be looking at you. Keep away from me.

WITCH. That is the story they give out about the Hag of Slaughter. It is for the like of them we that are ever-living must put on the ugly image of age. Let them see me as they have made me out to be.

PAMPOGUE. Whisht! There is some one coming.

WITCH. Come back here out of their sight. (*They take up bushes and branches and stand behind them.*)

(*Enter* RURY *and* SIMON.)

SIMON. I wish we could see some lodging. There is a queer sound from the sky. I heard like a blast of wind that would lay the thistles low.

RURY. It is but a storm is rising.

SIMON. To come a sudden darkening of the light there did.

RURY. It is but a cloud over the moon. You are losing courage to be in dread of that.

SIMON. I did not, but sore in the heart with walking I am. My legs are near worn to the knee. I might as well be a car-wheel on the road.

RURY. If there is a long road behind us it is likely the road before us is longer again.

SIMON. The soles of my boots is near wore out.

RURY. They will have to last a good while yet.

SIMON. They will, where they lasted near thirty years already, for they will be but the soles of my two feet.

(*Branches waved around them.*)

RURY. We would seem to be gone astray in some forest.

SIMON. In some terrible wilderness of a wood.

RURY. Hush! I am thinking it should be the Wood of Wonders. There is some music playing of itself.

(*A wild air is played.*)

SIMON. I would say it to be the sea roaring as if all the people of the world were to be drowned. Believe me, it is best for us turn back.

RURY. You came out boasting you were in dread of nothing.

SIMON. I am not, and the sun to be in the heavens. The day is getting as dark as if all the men in the King's jail were being hanged!

RURY. That was a branch fell upon my head.

SIMON. It was no branch fell on myself, but some person hit a stroke on my back.

RURY. There is no person here to do that.

SIMON. There is another—and another!

RURY. Do not give in to fancy. There is no one hitting you at all.

SIMON. It is you yourself is doing it! It is an unkind thing doing that!

RURY. I feel strokes coming on myself. They are given with a whip of thorns.

SIMON. Turn back I tell you, bring your life out of this!

RURY. I will bring it out on the other side. I will not go doubling like a hare.

SIMON. There is a lion of roaring!

RURY. I wish he would come before my sword.

SIMON. There is like the howling of red-haired wolves! There is a shiver of fright going through me! I don't wish to be killed, where I was not brought up to it like kings' sons.

RURY. We cannot lose our life spending it in dread of death.

SIMON. The thirty walls of heaven to be lighting bonfires to be welcoming me, I would sooner go back to my own parish.

RURY. The doctor would make fun of you, seeing you now.

SIMON. That he himself may be put under curses and spells and the unnatural creatures of the air!

RURY. All I would ask is light to recognise them.

SIMON. Natural things to come against me I would not know fear or fright—— Do you hear that now?

RURY. They are but shapes and spirits. They can do us no bodily harm.

SIMON. There is a hand touched me.

RURY. It was of no living person. The feel of it was like the feel of ice.

SIMON. There is like a shivering come upon me—— What is that passed by?

RURY. Three bald clowns having three hounds in their hands, and three reddened spears.

SIMON. Who is there? Keep yourself away from me!

A VOICE. I am a man of the hurlers without heads. Four-and-twenty men of us, and the ball we are playing with is my own head. (*Sound of sticks upon a ball.*)

SIMON. I wouldn't wish to be hunted through Ireland by hard bristly heads without legs!

RURY. What do you want of us?

VOICE. Dig a grave for us! Dig a grave for us! (*They go off.*)

SIMON. There is a foot with a spur on it.

RURY. Take that foot out of my path! (*Strikes at it.*)

ANOTHER VOICE. I tell you, this time yesterday there was no one dared meddle with that foot!

RURY. There are horrible things about us!

MANY VOICES. Go back! Go back! There is no road for you here!

(WITCH *appears.*)

SIMON. Look at her, look! That one would make a hare of you! She is the Hag of Slaughter!

RURY. I will never turn back for any Witch's bidding!

A VOICE. Many a better thief than yourself went the same journey and not a one ever came back!

(*There are shrieks, and snow is thrown about them, then a thick smoke.*)

RURY. It is like the smoke of elder-wood. We will go on.

SIMON. Wait awhile—my heart is panting. I thought the world was going down!

RURY. The smoke is clearing away.

SIMON. Oh! There came a smell from it like as if all the dead people of the world were there!

(*Smoke clears away.* WITCH *seen sitting by a fire singing a lament. She is not wearing mask and horns, but has a black shawl over her head. Her grey hair is hanging.*)

WITCH. Stop here and eat a bit with me, King of Ireland's son!

SIMON. Do not stop with her. She is no way pleasing to look at, and her hair down to her heels.

RURY. I am hurrying on my journey, I have no time to stop in any place.

WITCH. I to have grandeur about me, and a grand big dinner to give you, you would stop. But because I am poor and miserable and have but a bone to offer you, you will not stop.

RURY. That is not so; it is that I am in haste.

WITCH. The man that will not show respect to those who are low, even if he is high, he will get no respect for himself.

SIMON. Do not stop with her! She will work on us a charm or a spell! (WITCH *goes on keening.*)

RURY (*pushing him off*). It is a habit of my habits never to listen to the call of a lone woman without getting knowledge of her case. What name have you?

WITCH. My name is Sighing and Sorrow, Black Night of Winter, White Night of Snow; Grief, Groaning, Keening, and a Grave!

RURY. What is it ails you?

WITCH. Sit down till I will tell you. Twelve sons I had and they are all after being brought away to their death.

RURY. What way can I help you?

WITCH. Go back, bring the armies of the King of Ireland, till they will go against the armies of the Dogheads that brought them away.

RURY. I cannot do that. I must go on until my business will be done. I will come then and help you.

WITCH. You are deceiving me.

RURY. I never left a lie after me in any place.

WITCH. Take this bone in your hand; put this flesh I offer you in your mouth.

RURY. I will not deny you because you are in trouble and grief.

(RURY *is putting a bit in his mouth when* PAMPOGUE *comes behind him and snatches it from him.*)

PAMPOGUE. Use none of her food or you are a gone man! It is best throw it in the fire. (*She throws it away.*)

WITCH. My seven curses upon you, you have freed him when I all but had him in my hands!

RURY. You are lying to me, and deceiving me! You are no lone woman wanting help.

WITCH. I will get you yet! I will tear the heart out of you! I swear it by the earth that holds the graves of the dead!

RURY. There is no fear on me. I know who you are. You are the Hag of Slaughter.

WITCH. I am that! And I tell you I myself will set the ravens croaking over your grave.

RURY. They will never croak and call out in Connacht that I was brought down by a hag! Have a care now! I am loth to shed the blood of a woman, but it would be right for me to strike at a witch! (*He takes* SIMON *by the shoulder and goes off waving a sword.*)

WITCH (*to* PAMPOGUE). That is what you have done with your meddling and your want of wit.

PAMPOGUE. You lied to me! He is a king's son. I would not give you leave to put poison in his mouth.

WITCH. Fool! You think to manage me and to set yourself over me! It was no poison. It was the food that would put him under my power for ever, and he taking and eating it from my hand.

PAMPOGUE. Get him into your power again and put the seven

spells of love on him. I will have nothing to do with your Giants and Grugachs, it is with that man only I will wed.

WITCH. You are on the path of destruction now. My grief that I let you leave the garden!

PAMPOGUE. Go, get me that king's son!

WITCH. Have you no thought at all for her who cared and reared you, and gave in to everything you would ask?

PAMPOGUE. Get me what I want! You filled me with the things I did not want. It is my own way I will go now!

WITCH. It will be a bad way for you and for yourself. But take your own way. I will get him for you, if striving will do it. I will give him the golden apple. It will buy for you his love. But I thought the man was not born in Ireland that would stand against my spells as he did.

(*The same wild music is heard.*)

SCENE IV. *A room in the* GIANT'S *castle. He and Wife are playing Fox and Goose on a large blackboard with chalk.*

WIFE. This and this blots out that——and one for the good of my make. I rub out your noughts and put in my own crosses.

GIANT (*throwing down his bit of chalk*). I'll play no more Fox and Goose. You had me beat last time. (*He yawns.*)

WIFE. What now would you wish to be doing?

GIANT. Couldn't you draw down a new story or an old story out of the book.

WIFE. The History of the Giants is it? It's a holy terror to be reading them. (*Takes book and sits down.*) Which now will be your choice? There's as many of them as my fingers and toes. This one is the story of Fuath of the Seven Heads and Seven Humps and Seven Necks, that was one of the best giants ever counted in Ireland.

GIANT. I heard that before.

WIFE. You did not, but of the Scotch giant of the Seven Glens and Seven Bens and Seven Bogs.

GIANT. What now did he do?

WIFE (*looking in book*). He used to be dragging six bullocks by their tails at the one time, and to go harrow the ground with the bristled body of two wild boars he would tie to the two strings of his shoe.

GIANT. Am I now as strong as that one?

WIFE. You are to be sure, my dear, you are.

GIANT. Sound me out another.

WIFE. Would you wish Head-without-Body, son of King of the Castles, that came home from his morning ramble driving seven kings in a gad?

GIANT. Could I now do that much?

WIFE. You could, my dear, you could.

GIANT. This is such a backward place I would hardly meet with a king in a twelvemonth, where they are all banished, I suppose, to their own countries. Go on now.

WIFE. There is a very pretty little story of one Dearg Mor. His head and his hands that were after being cut off came playing cards with Finn Mac Cuil on a ship.

GIANT. I wouldn't wish my head and hands to be cut off. It is often I do be thinking since I turned to be a giant I might have followed some better trade.

WIFE. You might have gone as a billeted soldier in the line army, to be a bully in the service of a king.

GIANT. I am thinking it is a middling easy job to be a king.

WIFE. There are giants left as good a name after them, such as Polyphemus that was killed by the great Greek.

GIANT. Kings go from father to son, and one that is slack in his wits might not be found out for a long while. But you have to be a giant of yourself, and to put up your own name.

WIFE. So you do put it up, my dear, so you do.

GIANT. I am thinking there is a reflection on giants, now people are getting to be so cranky and so enlightened. What story now will be written in the book of myself, the great Giant, Fatach Mor?

WIFE (*jumping up*). I myself to write the book, I would say he was a great bother stopping all through the day in the house, and not to go and cut a few heads of cabbage for the dinner.

GIANT. Ah, what dinner? I am not able to lessen on anything worth while this long time. I have the appetite lost.

WIFE. To move about and to stir yourself you should, and to lend a hand turning the hay.

GIANT. I cannot grabble with everything at once. Little you care if I got as thin as a fishing-rod. I, now, suffer more than any common man. There is more room for the pain to work by reason of the height of my body and the length there is in my limbs.

WIFE. Let you send for a doctor so, if you are not satisfied with the attendance I am giving you.

GIANT. A doctor should have more knowledge.

WIFE. Never fear, he'll have knowledge enough to take your money, giving your sickness every name longer than another.

GIANT. It is yourself begrudges them the fee.

WIFE. Fee enough not to cut the head off them. Giving you, maybe, medicines were in bottles on the shelf these sixty years, that you hardly could read the labels on them.

GIANT. There is a physician, they were telling me, at the King of Ireland's Court. The capital doctor of the country he is. He is greatly beloved with the King.

WIFE. He should be free by this, for I heard a good while ago the King was in a dying state under his hand.

GIANT. Can't you give your mind now to send your pigeon messenger to bid him put on his coat of healing and come hither without delay. Give me some sort of a note or a writing for him.

WIFE. Ah! Get out the door, will you, and I'll give you anything you'll ask outside heaven!

GIANT (*at door to left*). It is on you it will fall, any harmless person to get their death seeing me on the road—through terror of my height and of my size.

WIFE. Close the door after you!

GIANT (*putting in his head again*). Don't forget, now, setting out the yard as a giant's yard should be set out, every fork but one having a head on it.

WIFE. Have a care! I am about to throw scalding water out the door! (*She lifts pot from fire.* GIANT *slams door and goes.*) (*Sitting down.*) My joy go with you in a bottle of moss, and if you never come back you'll be no great loss! (*She takes out a little stocking, turns out money into her lap and counts it. There is a knock at door to right.*) Come in!

(RURY *and* SIMON *enter, very travel-stained and tired.*)

RURY. We are travelling a long time. Can you give us food and rest?

WIFE (*jumping up and curtseying low*). My hundred thousand welcomes to you, King's son from Ireland!

RURY. What way do you know me?

WIFE. Why wouldn't I recognise the signs of a king, and I reared in Connacht? You are the highest blood in Ireland, by your father anyway.

RURY. It is a good thing to meet with a welcome.

WIFE. You never were more welcome, and if there were ten of you, you would be welcome! But is it that you came riding spread-legs down a rainbow, or what way at all did you come?

RURY. We travelled a queer long way coming here.

SIMON. We did surely. We have half the world walked.

WIFE. You should have come through great dangers.

SIMON. If we did, we came through them all. That lad, my master, would face anything, dog or Christian, he would meet.

WIFE. I didn't hear a Connacht man's voice the seven years I am a Giant's wife.

SIMON. What giant?

WIFE. This is the house of Fatach Mor.

SIMON (*uneasily*). Is it that there is within that door a full room of skulls?

RURY. Give us something to eat, and we will go on our road.

WIFE (*putting porridge from a saucepan into bowls*). You couldn't eat healthier than the oatmeal. It will give you nice courage for a while. We don't have meat in the house but one day in the week, and that day is yesterday.

SIMON. I suppose the Giant devours his meal abroad, tearing and rending it where it falls. It should be a terrible thing to be wed with a man the like of that.

WIFE. Indeed, I'd sooner be at my own liberty than confined in this place. Whisper—— I am trying to fill a little stocking against the time I'll go back to Connacht.

RURY. Can you give me news of the Garden that is at the World's End?

WIFE. It is I myself can give it.

RURY. I have to get an apple there for my father's healing. Is it far?

WIFE. You never would be able to reach it, and you not getting help on the way.

RURY. You don't know, I suppose, the Witch that owns it, that is said to be the Hag of Slaughter?

WIFE. I myself know her, and it's well I know her, and it's I do know her.

RURY. Is she as bad as what they say?

WIFE. She is, and worse.

SIMON. Sure we got a sketch of her below in the Wood of Wonders; a horned, twisted hag.

WIFE. That's not her. The wasting of time does not touch her. She kept her youth through being thorny-hearted, and taking an odd sleep through seven years.

RURY. What way will we know her?

WIFE. You couldn't know her. When she has a mind she looks

as innocent as a little child would be picking strawberries in the grass. She does be coming here often of late.

SIMON. To this house?

WIFE. The Giant that is turned matchmaker through her means, where his kinsman the Grugach of the Humming is coming looking for a woman of a wife. To put us to the expense of the wedding they will, that will have a year's firing used in a week.

SIMON. Is it with the Witch he will go wed?

WIFE. He will not, but with the daughter. Much good may it do her! And he having but one foot and one eye, and it in the middle of his head.

RURY. It should be hard for him find a wife.

WIFE. Ah, he has the riches. And the girl is no great blood, where her father was but a well-looking Munster man, coaxed the Witch with a sweet note in his voice.

RURY (*putting down bowl and mug*). It is time for us go on towards the Garden.

WIFE. Did you get warning of the dangers of the road?

RURY. We got news of them, the Blazing Mountain and the Hill of Spearheads.

WIFE. Look now what I will do for you, if I put my own neck in the rope. I would like well that you would get the better of the witch-woman and put an end to her matches and her meddling. Do you see what is there hanging on the wall?

RURY. It is a ball of flax.

SIMON. Twisted it is on a crooked holly stick.

WIFE. It is not any size at all to be looking at, but it will give out a thousand miles of thread.

SIMON. Is it that there is enchantment in it?

WIFE. It has that much of a charm it would bring you through all the world. It is the Witch left it there, the way Fatach Mor would be able to go up and down giving her news of the coming of the Grugach, where it is tethered to an apple tree in the Garden. Go throwing it before you, and come up with it as far as it goes.

RURY. It will bring us to that tree?

WIFE. As straight as a bullet. It will be a high bridge over fire, and as to the spearheads, you passing over them they will turn their points straight downwards. What, now, do you say to me?

SIMON. Very good. It is a man without sense would go climbing a fence would be hard, and a fence would be low and easy being beside him.

RURY. I will tell the King, my father, it was you that saved his life.

WIFE. You are welcome, dear, you're welcome. Well, God enable you! And that you may put nettles growing upon the Witch's hearth! (*Three roars heard.*)

SIMON. What at all is that?

WIFE. It is Himself coming in.

RURY. It is best for us go on. I have no wish to do hurt to your man.

WIFE. You are late. He is at the door.

SIMON. Put us in hiding till he will be gone.

WIFE. Get in here to the chest of bog deal. (SIMON *slips in.*)

RURY. I will stop here behind the dresser. I might make a run past.

WIFE. You cannot, but wait till I will put him asleep. You can make a leap then out the door.

GIANT (*coming in*). I am thinking you gave me a good advice. I am feeling some desire for my meal.

WIFE. That is great. What now will I make ready for you?

GIANT (*throwing down some heads of cabbage*). I took down a few of the heads are on the forks since yesterday. Let you put them in the pot to boil.

(SIMON *who has lifted an inch of the lid of chest shuts it again, terrified.*)

(*Excited.*) Fru, Fra, Fashog! I smell the smell of a melodious lying Irishman!

WIFE. Oh no, my dear. It is but a breeze passed over a boat sailing from Connemara, and brought a hint of the smoke from the turf.

GIANT. I have no mind friends of your own to be coming to pick knowledge of myself and my ways. That is the way they get to lose their respect for us.

WIFE. Oh no, but more respect for yourself they would get.

GIANT. Give me here the knife. I will be slicing and cutting the heads. (SIMON *peeps out again, terrified.*)

(*Turning.*) Fru, Fra, Fashog! I smell the smell of the melodious lying——

WIFE. Oh no, my dear. It is but the little root of shamrock I brought in my box, that is blooming out in the green plot abroad in the yard.

GIANT. Those men of Ireland are getting too saucy altogether!

Look now till you'll see the way I'll take a hold of this by the neck and will cleave it with one stroke!

(*Holds up a cabbage:* SIMON *again tries to peep.*) (*Throwing down cabbage.*) It is lies you are telling me! I am certain I smell the smell!

WIFE (*putting hand on his arm*). Oh, my dear, I was in dread you would be jealous if I told you. It was a little bird from Ireland perched upon my shoulder a while ago, and I out bleaching the tablecloths for the Grugach's wedding feast. Go out now and put a few more heads upon the forks before any person will pass by.

GIANT. I to mind you I would have my feet wore to flitters running here and there.

WIFE. Come over here, my dear, and I will sing you Grania's little sleepy song she used to be crooning over Diarmuid, to soothe him till the dinner would be boiled.

GIANT. I will sit down here on the chest.

WIFE. No, but come here out of the draught of wind is coming in at the door. (*He sits down in easy-chair.*) Here is a pillow for your head. (*She sits on arm of chair and sings*) "Sleep a little, my blessing on you, my lamb from beside the pool; Oh, heart of courage beyond all courage, there is not a woman but envies me to-day."

GIANT (*sitting up proudly*). I to fall asleep, waken me with three blows of a hammer from the Forge of the Four-and-twenty Smiths.

WIFE. I will, my dear, I will. (*Sings*) "Let your sleep be like the sleep in the east, of the great hero was called the Sluggard. A pair of tongs he had upon his back, and a squealing pig between the two hands of the tongs!"

GIANT (*looking up*). If that song puts me to sleep, waken me with letting fall on me a beam from the roof!

WIFE. If that doesn't waken you I'll cut the toe off you—— (*Sings*) "Let your sleep be like the sleep in the west, of Halfman that carried a churchyard on his back!"

GIANT (*looking up*). That is a giant you would call a giant!

WIFE (*speaking rapidly*). The best sleep ever he got was through the rattling of an iron candlestick having three branches, and nine apples weighing nine stone upon every branch! (*She takes poker and tongs and rattles them upon iron pot.*)

(GIANT *seems to sleep profoundly. During the clamour,* SIMON *scrambles out of chest, and he and* RURY *go to door.* WIFE *puts down fireirons and waves a hand to them.*)

SIMON (*at door*). That was the longest hour that ever was on the hands of the clock!

(GIANT *starts up.* RURY *and* SIMON *rush out of door, locking it after them.*)

GIANT. There is some one gone out the door!

WIFE. You are dreaming, my dear, through your sleep.

GIANT (*at window*). Two of them that are in it!

WIFE. Oh, the villains! Go after them and stop them!

GIANT. They have the door locked!

WIFE. It's easy for you wrench it open.

GIANT. I have no time to put on my battle dress.

WIFE. You could go a short-cut through the window.

GIANT. I wonder at you! You know well to go out of the window I would have to take off my tree-legs—— (*Shows stilts under his clothing.*) The people to see me that way, it is likely they would be saying me not to be a real giant!

Curtain.

ACT II

SCENE I. *The Garden.* WITCH *and* GARDENER. *The* WITCH *is richly dressed.*

WITCH (*looking at apple tree*). The thread is tightening. Some person is coming here having the ball in his hand.

GARDENER. It might be Fatach Mor the Giant. It was to him you gave the use of it.

WITCH. It is not. I know by the feel of the flax it is a man with a heart of courage has a grip of it.

GARDENER. It can be no one but some friend of your own, ma'am, would have the string.

WITCH. It is no friend. I know well who it is. If I refuse him the apple, it is likely he will rob it in spite of me. He has robbed me of more than that, more than that. I will lose her. It fails me the strength to cross her. I must give him to her, I will bid her make ready to meet him. My grief that she ever laid an eye on him! He will vex her heart yet. (*Goes left.*)

GARDENER (*looks after* WITCH *and shakes his head*). You have

that slip of a daughter too much petted. A peevish colleen, a peevish colleen! It is often a woman cut a rod would beat herself in the end. (*He goes aside.*)

(RURY *and* SIMON *come on right.*)

RURY. There now at last is the apple!

SIMON. I wonder is it of solid gold.

RURY. It is better than that, having healing in it.

SIMON. That is so. The health is the only riches.

RURY. What is that shining at the foot of the tree?

SIMON. It is but a curl of hair.

RURY. It is shining of itself.

SIMON. Pluck down now the apple and come out of this.

RURY. There must be some great beauty in the garden. I will go seek her.

SIMON. I am in dread of the Hag. Get the apple and come.

RURY. I am certain I will wed with no other one but the woman that owns this curl.

SIMON. Come on now for pity's sake.

RURY. Stop here till I will go look for her among the trees. (*Goes.*)

WITCH (*coming in*). It was not you had a hold of the end of the thread?

SIMON. It was not, your honour my ladyship. It was my master. He is taking a view of the beauties of the garden.

WITCH. What brought him here?

SIMON. For a cure he came. A lovely garden it is—a very grand place. I wonder now where is the witch-woman that owns it?

WITCH. Would you recognise her if you saw her?

SIMON. I would to be sure. Didn't she rise spirits before us in the wood beyond. It isn't easy mistake her. A beautiful lady like yourself, ma'am, would get your death to be looking at her like. A flattened bluish sort of a nose. Hair the same as a horse's tail.

WITCH. Is that the way she is?

SIMON. The ugliest you would see in the world. You wouldn't be the better of it in a year. Nails like the tips of cows' horns. A greenish tusk shaped like a reaping-hook going back to her ear. Six foot of goats' horns going back from her head.

WITCH. That is enough of talk. Tell me this, has your master himself promised to any one?

SIMON. He has not. Sure he is only hardly a boy!

WITCH. Has he any secret love?

SIMON. He wouldn't look at a woman's face, and Helen to be

walking the road from Troy; but at hounds, at the hunting, or horses making their leaps.

WITCH. Go, call him here.

SIMON. Here he is coming. It is himself will tell your honourable ladyship I am telling no lie.

RURY. I am come to ask for that apple.

WITCH. That is a great thing to ask.

RURY. It is for the cure of a wounded king.

WITCH. It is for one like yourself it has been waiting, a man with daring and with good luck.

RURY. I am thankful for that word. I will pluck it and bring it away.

WITCH. Hold your hand. Whoever will get that apple has one promise to give.

RURY. Tell it out to me.

WITCH. He must put himself under bonds to wed with the young girl that is here with it in the garden.

RURY. That is what I would wish, and she being the great beauty I take her to be.

WITCH. She is, and better again.

RURY. Tell me where can I get a sight of her.

WITCH. Go over west to the butt of a yew tree that is shaped like a table. I will bid her bring you meat and wine.

(*Goes left,* RURY *is going right.*)

GARDENER. Come hither, King's son of Ireland!

RURY. I cannot stop.

GARDENER. Have a care! Have a care!

RURY. I see nothing to be in dread of.

GARDENER. There is a great deal a man should be in dread of and he thinking to take a wife.

RURY. If that is all the danger I will face it.

GARDENER. There are some that might be dressed up with all the colours of the birds, might not be as good as one might be wearing a poor girl's suit.

RURY. It is not dress I would think of, beside beauty and courage and sweet speech.

GARDENER. That is so. To be mannerly and not to have anything to say with any one, but to carry your own character.

RURY. I must go to the butt of the yew tree.

GARDENER. Do not. Stop here behind this cluster of bushes. It's the young lady herself that is coming, you will see her on the minute.

RURY (*going behind bushes*). There are two coming.

(PAMPOGUE *and* MUIREANN *come in.*)

PAMPOGUE. Stop now till I will see my face in the well. (*Looks in.*) Do I look good to-day?

MUIREANN. You can see the shining of your jewels in the water.

PAMPOGUE. Will you come herding geese for me the time I will be wedded with the King of Ireland's son?

MUIREANN. If I go it will be for the reason I stop here, the strength of your mother's power.

PAMPOGUE. You are right to be in dread of her. She that can put upon you the shape of a whale of the ocean, or of a midge of the air.

MUIREANN. That power might not be lasting.

PAMPOGUE. She will have pith and power so long as she owns the Three Rods of Magic and Mastery.

MUIREANN. Some one who is stronger again might bring them away from her.

PAMPOGUE. They are well hidden. You would never make out where they are.

MUIREANN. It is likely she keeps them close at hand.

PAMPOGUE. She does not. She thinks no person knows where they are—but I know.

MUIREANN. How can you know if she did not tell you?

PAMPOGUE. She did not tell me, but I put my eye to the keyhole one night she was talking to the Wizard of the Withered Knee. She gave them to him wrapped in holly bark. I put my ear to the hole.

MUIREANN. That was a wrong thing to do.

PAMPOGUE. If I did not do it I would not have heard what she said. "Go, put them," she said, "in the farthest room of the house of the Sidhe that is in the hill of Knockmaa." I have a mind to go look for them myself, the way I will get the mastery over the King of Ireland's son.

MUIREANN. I will leave down these dishes on the yew tree and go back to my work.

PAMPOGUE. You will not! I would wish you to see the prince who will be my husband, and that you yourself will never get the like of. You can take a view of him, but he will never cast an eye on yourself.

(*A bird sings.*)

MUIREANN. Listen! There is joy in his little sweet song.

PAMPOGUE. Give me that stone.

MUIREANN. What do you want with it?

PAMPOGUE. I want it to fire at that bird. (*Throws stone.*)

MUIREANN. Come on to the yew tree.

PAMPOGUE (*with a scream*). There is a snail! Put your foot on it!

MUIREANN. No, I will put it among the ivy leaves.

PAMPOGUE (*trying to slap her*). I'll call your owner to give you cruelty, where you will not do my commands. Goose girl! Goose girl! (*Goes mocking.*)

(RURY *and* GARDENER *come on.*)

GARDENER. Which now of the two has the seven blessings going along with her?

RURY (*to* MUIREANN). It is you surely are the young queen.

MUIREANN. I am daughter and granddaughter and great-granddaughter of kings.

GARDENER. It was easy for *him* to recognise the stock of kings.

MUIREANN. I am kept here in the garden by the malice and treachery of a witch.

RURY. Will you come to be wife of a king and mother of kings to come?

MUIREANN. What way can I escape from her spells?

RURY. I will bring you away from her power. I will make an end of her.

GARDENER. It is hard treatment she should get. To take a poor child up in her hand and to torment her the way she does.

RURY. O Flower of the raspberry! It is in my heart you are come to harbour. There was never the like of you on the face of the earth! Your shadow only would set all the kings of the world quarrelling.

MUIREANN. It is empty I would be coming to your house. I that was used to golden vessels, I have not now of the goods of the world but my five brothers only, that are turned to fishes in the well.

RURY. I will make a sunny-house for you, thatched with the feathers of the birds! I will put a carpet of silk under your feet.

MUIREANN. That is the way it was with me, and I in the Court of Spain.

RURY. I will give red wine to the horse you will ride; it is on flowers he will set his golden shoe.

MUIREANN. If I knew you to have no wife, I would not wed with any man but yourself.

RURY. There is the love of hundreds in your face and there is the promise of the evening star.

MUIREANN. My face that was sheltered and my hands that were under no weight, only gold rings, are brown with the weather and hard.

RURY. The driven snow on the mountain is nine times blacker than the blackberry beside your whiteness! All the women of the world are rushlights in an iron socket, but you are a candlestick of gold on a queen's table.

MUIREANN. It is long since I heard talk like that.

RURY. Neither star nor sun shows half as much light as your shadow!

MUIREANN. I think your name should be Honeymouth out from Ireland.

RURY. When the men of Ireland see me bringing you back to them, their hearts will be under the sole of your shoe.

MUIREANN. Will you surely bring me there with you?

RURY. I will surely. It is you will make every happy thing happier. All the days of the years to come are waiting for your footstep to tread upon them.

MUIREANN. To have been under unkindness and reproach for so long and to hear you say those words, it is like as if the dead quarter of the year is gone by, and the birthday of the spring at hand.

RURY. You are a little silver birch tree all alone upon a rock, washed in the white rays of the moon.

MUIREANN. I have been alone indeed and as desolate as a bare bush left in a gap.

RURY. There is many a woman would go cranky and bitter under such hardness.

MUIREANN. There is no hardship coming on me now but I would laugh at it, as happy as the rising sun.

GARDENER. Make no delay, King's son. The Witch is coming here. Pluck down the apple and go.

RURY. I will bring this queen-woman with me to my father's house. I must bring her away from danger.

MUIREANN. Oh yes, bring me away! They will never let me come to you again.

GARDENER. She must not quit the garden at this time. There is danger about her on the road. To bring her away you must come again with power that is greater than the power of the Witch.

RURY. If I do not get her I will not leave a head on any one in the place!

GARDENER. Listen to the sound of her stick stirring the dead leaves—— It is like hammering nails in a coffin. It is not swords can go against that one, but to shoot her with a bullet having three times nine curses on it. Go, do your work, and I will find the secret of her magic. I think I have come near it now.

MUIREANN. He is maybe right. He has wisdom and knowledge. But oh, isn't it a great pity!

RURY. I will be back with you as swift as the swallow.

MUIREANN. You will forget me, going away.

RURY. I will never forget you while green grass grows.

MUIREANN. You will maybe turn away from me, seeing I am not so nice looking as what you think.

RURY. That will happen when it is the shadow of the hollow that will fall upon the side of the hill.

GARDENER. Hurry, hurry, it is a long road.

MUIREANN. Take these little cakes, two of them to eat on the road, and one to bring back to Ireland. I have left on them three drops of honey, where I touched them with three fingers of my hand. And take with them my little pipe of music. I will come to you whenever I hear its call.

WITCH'S VOICE. The bride is gone to the butt of the yew tree. Where is the bridegroom, the King's son of Ireland?

(RURY *and* MUIREANN *go out of sight.*)

(*Coming on.*) The bargain is made and the promise given. What are you doing there, Gardener? Where is the King of Ireland's son?

GARDENER (*pointing upwards*). Listen, listen!

WITCH. What would I listen to?

GARDENER. To the talk of the filibines and stairs overhead!

WITCH. They have no news or message for me.

GARDENER. I suppose not, I suppose not. They are but crying that the house of the Sidhe is on fire, that is in the hill of Knockmaa.

WITCH (*with a shriek*). The hidden house at Knockmaa!

GARDENER. The houses of the witches are blazing up, they are crying, and all their furniture and their goods!

WITCH. My Rods of Magic and Mastery that are in it! Ochone, my grief! (*She rushes off.*)

GARDENER. That was a lucky lie. She will go out on the wind to Knockmaa. The bands of death on her, and whatever part of her the crows will not eat, let the dogs of the wilderness devour!

(RURY *and* MUIREANN *come back.*)

RURY (*kissing her*). My hundred loves, my share of the world!

MUIREANN. Oh dear black head!

(RURY *plucks the apple from the tree and goes.*)

SCENE II. *Same room in the Giant's castle.* GIANT *sitting in high easy chair with pillows and medicine bottles. A catapult in his hand.*

WIFE (*bringing in doctor*). Here is the doctor after coming from the King of Ireland's Court.

GIANT. Wait a minute. (*Fires a stone through window.*) I was just taking aim with my catapult at a pet blackbird is perched on the shoulder of an enemy I have out in the far-off Indies. Could the King of Ireland now do that much?

DOCTOR (*pompously*). He being a King has no need doing that sort of thing for himself, where he has his ships and his armies to go torment and put down his enemies.

GIANT (*dropping catapult*). May be so—— It should be a very nice thing to be a King of armies.

DOCTOR. I cannot be losing time stopping here from the side of the King's bed. What is it ails you?

GIANT. Slack enough in the health I am. Some weeks fair enough and some weeks no action—— Has the King now any sickness on him of that sort?

DOCTOR. The King is on the broad of his back, last harvest was a year.

WIFE. Let you put a face on yourself and speak up to the doctor.

GIANT. On and on sickly I am. A day in bed—a day out of bed.

DOCTOR. Do you go walking or leaping or running, for to give exercise to your limbs?

GIANT. I do—some times. Herself that sent me but yesterday gathering kippeens.

WIFE. If I did, you did not bring in enough of them to make a crow's nest.

GIANT. It is the way I spent the time, knotting trees together. It is as good for me bring in the whole forest at the one time.

DOCTOR. Have you the appetite lost?

GIANT. That is the most thing ails me.

DOCTOR (*to* WIFE). You have a right to boil down old hens for him. But maybe hens is nothing to a giant. What now are you used to take at your meal?

GIANT (*taking hold of book*). Oh, I might bring in a wild boar for my dinner and draw it through the ashes and leave nothing of the four quarters of it but the bones. Or to tear a bullock in two halves, and to boil the one half of it and roast the other half, and devour them bit about.

WIFE. Don't be showing off now. Tell out your case fair and plain.

DOCTOR. I would wish to look at your tongue.

GIANT (*standing up*). Bridget, put up here the stepladder for the doctor.

WIFE. That you may be forgiven.

GIANT. Would you put him to the trouble to make a staircase, cutting notches in the backs of my legs?

(DOCTOR *climbs ladder and looks at tongue.*)

DOCTOR (*coming down*). To give up using so much meat you should. It is too much blood it is making. Wait now till I will notch on an elder stick the diet for your days. Not more now than one sucking pig for breakfast; and for dinner, one quarter of beef; and at supper, a sheep boiled in cow's milk. (GIANT *gives a groan.*) Or two sheep—not to be too hard on you in the commencement. I will stop and see you eating this day's meal myself.

GIANT. That would be too troublesome; it would be hardly worth while change my diet between this and the feast I will be giving in a few days for the wedding of the Grugach of the Humming.

WIFE. Ah, give over fooling. What ails you not to speak out the truth to a doctor that should know what you eat as well as if he was inside you.

GIANT. I am not willing.

WIFE. I tell you it doesn't signify giving out your case to a doctor, that is bound under bonds to betray your secret to no other one.

GIANT. One person to know it, and you to know him to know it, is the same as if it was known to all the world.

WIFE. He is ashamed telling you meat does not suit him. His talk of boars and of bullocks are from the stories and vanities of the books. He does not use but a pot of stirabout in the morning and a hen's egg, maybe, for kitchen with his barley bread at night.

GIANT. A goose's egg! A goose's.

DOCTOR. I knew well he was but humbugging and talking foolishly.

WIFE. You need not be making little of him on the head of it. It does not lessen his courage if he uses no meat, he having a weak stomach, since the time he was a child.

DOCTOR. Give me a hold of your pulse. It is much if I do not put you under a curse of blisters for striving to hide from me your case.

WIFE. There is some doctors who can recognise what sickness is

on a man by the smoke they see going out of the chimney of his house. I knew of one could tell it by measuring you.

DOCTOR (*sarcastically*). He would! Or by the colour of your hair.

GIANT. It is a hard thing I to use so little, not like some would-be gluttonous, and to have that pain and depression on my chest.

DOCTOR. Does the pain be leaping from side to side?

GIANT. It does.

DOCTOR. There does be no leaping at some times, but quiet?

GIANT. That is so.

DOCTOR. I knew well I would come at it. It is in great danger you are. Did you ever go asleep in a meadow, and your mouth to be open, and you to be stretched alongside a running stream?

GIANT. It is likely I might.

DOCTOR. I was sure of that. It is what I am thinking, you have swallowed a water-worm or an eel.

GIANT. Do you say so?

DOCTOR. That is what is destroying you.

GIANT. So it will be too. It to be growing in bulk within me till it will get to be the size of a sea-serpent, and I myself getting to be as thin as thin!

DOCTOR. When he does be uneasy, the place being strange to him, that is the time you feel the pain.

GIANT. That's it! That it is.

DOCTOR. And the time he does be quiet is the time he does be consuming everything that you will eat.

GIANT. I feel it—I can nearly hear it! It is leaping in me the same as a little bird!

WIFE. What way will you do a cure on him?

DOCTOR. I will lay my mind now to that. (*A knock at door.*)

GIANT. Who at all is this?

WIFE. I wouldn't wonder it to be the witch.

DOCTOR. Is it the Hag of Slaughter? It is best for me go back out of this.

GIANT. No, but stop there alongside the hearth till she will be gone, and you can work on me my cure. She will not meddle with you at all.

WITCH (*coming in*). Death and destruction on you, Fatach Mor, where you parted with my ball of thread to a thief!

WIFE. There you have your answer. If it was a thief got it, it was a thief took it.

GIANT. What was it he stole?

WITCH. He stole more than riches. There is one thing he stole will fall heavy upon yourself.

GIANT. What now is that?

WITCH. He has taken my daughter's fancy. She would give him her share of the world and herself along with it. He has stolen her love.

WIFE. Why would that fall heavy on Fatach Mor?

WITCH. She has her mind made up not to marry and wed with the Grugach of the Humming, since she threw her eye on one of the world's men.

GIANT. Is it that she will break off the match?

WITCH. That is what I am telling you.

WIFE. There will be no need, so, for us to make ready the supper and the feast. You can put him off on the long finger.

GIANT. Do you want to make an end of me altogether? The Scotch are no way favourable to deal with, and they are apt to be tricky in the finish, not getting their own way.

WIFE. Find him another wife so.

GIANT. That is not so easy as you think. If he is no way handsome himself, he expects the youngest and the grandest in the world.

WITCH. It is well you have earned trouble, and it to fall on you, where you gave a harbour to the King of Ireland's son.

DOCTOR (*coming forward*). Is it that you are acquainted with the King of Ireland's son?

GIANT. To steal my ball of flax he did, and made his escape through that side door.

WITCH. He has stolen another thing. The golden apple from the Tree of Power.

DOCTOR. He has got that?

WITCH. To snap it away he did, and to go.

DOCTOR. He brought away the apple of healing?

WITCH. If he did I will get it back again. It is for that I am come here. This road is partly on his way home. Let you make a trap for him.

GIANT. Myself is it?

WITCH. He will be in need of provision. I have the money in his purse changed into pebbles of flint. It is likely he will turn up to this door.

GIANT. I have no mind to see him at all. Let him go on his way.

WITCH. I thought to get more thankfulness after all I have done for you, promising my own daughter to your kinsman.

GIANT. That promise is broke. He to come here itself it is likely he would refuse me the apple.

WITCH. He will refuse it surely. It is to fight him you must.

GIANT. I have no mind to go join in other people's quarrels.

WITCH. All you want is the courage. You are well able to best him. He is but a lad. No sign of a beard on him unless he would paint himself with blackberry juice.

GIANT. What way can I go killing and fighting, and a live worm being within me, is leaping on every side?

DOCTOR. Are you looking for a certain cure?

GIANT. Why would I send for you if I was not?

DOCTOR. There is but one cure for you to be found. Not having it, you will waste and wither and be that water-worm's prey.

GIANT. Give it to me without delay.

DOCTOR. It is that apple that is after being stole.

GIANT. What use is that, and it not being in my hand?

DOCTOR. You have to fight and put down the man that has it.

GIANT. Wouldn't some other apple do?

DOCTOR. If you set no value on your own life I may as well say good-bye to you.

WITCH. I will go bring the young lad a challenge from you. It is not long till he will blow the horn of battle at the door. (*Goes.*)

GIANT. I will refuse! To force me is no fair play.

DOCTOR (*to* WIFE, *putting on hat*). He will not be long with you. But you will be free from the cost of burying him, for you will find nc coffin will fit himself and the water-worm. It is best throw them into the tide. (*Is going.*)

GIANT. Do not go! I'll make an attack on him! I'll put him down, if he is a king's son! I'll devour him first and the apple after!

DOCTOR. No, but to do that would destroy you entirely. The monster is within you would get strength by that, and the lengthening of life. He will live to the womb of judgment! It is to me myself you have to give the apple.

GIANT. And what way will you rid me of him?

DOCTOR. To eat bacon and herrings and every salty thing you should, till there will be a great drought on him, and to lie down on the grass outside, and your mouth to be open, and the apple convenient to it.

GIANT. What will happen me then?

DOCTOR. To go wild mad with the drouth he will; getting the smell of the apple that is full of juice, he will make a leap out of your mouth, and, believe me, he will never enter into it again.

GIANT. That is a great plan now.

WIFE. Can you find no other way to cure him? A great shame and a great pity the lad to have gone through such hardships for the apple, and not to bring it home to his father after all, that is lying at the point of death. There must have been great need on the King when he sent the man is dearest to him in the world into such danger for his sake.

GIANT. That's the way with the wife I have, thinking of every other person's health before my own.

WIFE. Have you no kindness in you at all?

GIANT. It would be an unkind man would not be kind to his own life. (*Horn of battle is heard.*)

DOCTOR. Here is he coming! It is best for me not to be seen. I would not wish to be taking a side.

GIANT. Is it after shoving me into danger that you will not lend me a hand?

DOCTOR. I have here some ointment. I will rub it upon the boards. Let you drive him out this door, and it will be easy knock him. (*Rubs near door, right.*)

WIFE. A black shame on you. That you may die hard and die as you deserve it!

(*Horn heard again.* DOCTOR *hides.* WIFE *opens door, left.* RURY *and* SIMON *come in.*)

GIANT (*standing up*). Did you take notice of those forks outside?

RURY. I did not.

GIANT. Every one of them having a head on it but the one that is waiting for your head.

RURY. Is it my head or your own head that will go on the top of that spike?

GIANT. Give me up the apple you are after stealing, and I will let you go free out of this.

RURY. I will give you nothing at all, only a green sod over your head!

GIANT. Come on till I will put you under my long cold teeth!

RURY. Don't be thinking it's on feather beds I'll put yourself the time I will bring you down!

GIANT. I think you too big for one mouthful and not big enough for two mouthfuls! It is snuff I will make of your bones.

RURY. There are three shares of dread on you and not a share at all upon myself!

GIANT. It is boiled blood I will be drinking with my supper to-night!

SIMON. Go on, Rury, go on! I will come behind and tickle his ankles till he will stoop down to be scratching them!

GIANT. Is it fighting on fiery flagstones you are used to, or sticking red-hot knives into one another's hearts?

RURY. It is with this sword I will fight, that was cooled with three drops of lions' blood!

GIANT. So I have a sword of my own that nothing can stand against! I am after drawing it through the heart of the last man of three hundred!

SIMON. Go on, till we'll see Prince Rury's noble white silken feet go up, and your big ugly feet go down!

RURY. Come on, now!

GIANT. Go, take your stand on that spot beside the door.

RURY. No, but it is yourself I will put out through the door!

SIMON. If it fails you to knock him, try can you stagger him! (*Tries in vain to tickle stilts.*) There is great stand in him.

GIANT. If you are a half of the world, I am three-quarters of the world!

SIMON. Make a ball of him till his toes will be telling mischief and misfortune into the holes of his ears!

GIANT (*with a roar*). Make ready the big pot to boil him in!

(RURY *rushes at him.* GIANT *backs through door, left,* RURY *and* SIMON *rush after him. A heavy fall is heard and roar. They come back dragging* GIANT *by the stilts.*)

RURY. It is much if I give you your choice of two sods of the earth to die on!

SIMON. That's it! Tie him with the five knots!

GIANT. Leave me my life and I will give you my sword that will cut through a black stump of a log!

RURY. I see nothing blacker or uglier than your own head. (*Lifts sword.*)

SIMON. Strike the head off him! Put the cold of the sword to the marrow after that, till it will freeze and be scalded with cold!

WIFE. As you are strong, be merciful!

RURY. Do you give in altogether?

GIANT. I give you the victory and my seven thousand curses!

RURY. Didn't you know I was a Connacht man?

SIMON. It's as good for you to kill him out and out.

WIFE. Do not. There is no great harm in him except for a time he would be showing off. Ask mercy now and promise better behaviour.

GIANT. If I am a third of the world, yourself is the half of the world. Let me off now and I'll give my seven oaths I will never lay a cross finger on you again.

RURY. I am satisfied so. I am in a hurry to go on my way.

(RURY *is going out quickly by right door. He slips and falls with a cry. The apple rolls out.* DOCTOR *steals from corner and seizes it while* WIFE *and* SIMON *stoop to help* RURY.)

SIMON. It is the ankle is twisted on him. Rise up now if you can.

WIFE. Come out here, Doctor, and do your best for him.

DOCTOR. It is best bring him out by the side of the road and put a bed of green rushes under him.

(*He puts apple in his pocket and goes to door, right, as they help* RURY *to rise and go out, left.*)

GIANT (*mournfully*). He brought away the apple in the heel!

DOCTOR. You are not in need of it. I have the worm banished in another way. Believe me, you will not feel it leaping any more. (*Steals out quickly as* RURY *is helped out at other door.*)

SCENE III. *A roadside.* RURY *sitting up, half leaning on the grass.* SIMON *looking at him.*

SIMON. You are not fit to rise up at all, with weakness and want of sleep.

RURY. I have too much time lost. We must go on our journey home to Ireland.

SIMON. I don't know at all what was it knocked you.

RURY. It is the floor was as slippery as the flesh of eels.

SIMON. No wonder you to be left in a weakness, lying by the road out through the clouds of night.

RURY. Were we here all through the night-time?

SIMON. We were, till the night kissed the dawn, and beyond that again. There is red showing now in the evening sky.

RURY. It is far from my darling I will see the dawn of every day!

SIMON. I would wish us to be farther again, and our back to the garden and all that we have gone through.

RURY. I am lonesome after her. I to have seen her once it is a pity I do not see her every minute.

SIMON. It is lonesome enough I am myself. Lonesome after my supper I am.

RURY. Full or fasting we must go on till we bring the cure to my father.

SIMON. I would like well to be in the King's house, but I would not like to be travelling to it. It's there you would not be hungry or dry!

RURY. It is time for us set out.

SIMON. What ails you to be in such a hurry! Is it that the King gave you for a mother the wind of March? I wonder now what are they eating for their meal at this time? Roasted pork with the cracklings, black puddings and rounds of beef!

RURY. Barley bread would be enough to give us strength if we but had it.

SIMON. There is an old story carrying among people, that when a prince went meeting enchantments he would be apt to be given a tablecloth would be covered with every choice food, boiled and ready. Ah, what am I talking about. I'd be in heaven having a sheep's trotter in my hand, and a bit of a sixpenny loaf.

RURY. Why wouldn't you traffic for food in some place and then we will go on.

SIMON. Give me the purse so. If ever I get the chance of food again I will eat my seven enoughs!

RURY. Here it is. (*Gives purse.*)

SIMON (*opening it*). What happened the money! What now is this!

RURY (*looking*). There is nothing but pebbles of flint.

SIMON. As sure as you're living that is an enchantment put upon us by the Witch!

RURY. It is gone, whatever happened.

SIMON. We may as well, so, give in to famine. We'll be that thin by morning they can play cards with our corpses at the wake.

RURY. Give me my little crossbow. It might chance me to make a shot at a wild duck or at a swan.

SIMON. Don't make little of a crane itself, or a marten cat or a coney. I think that I have stood upon the hungry grass. (*Listens, then calls out*) Come back now! I hear the trots of horses! There is a knot of people coming.

(*Voices heard and some well-to-do people come in.* SIMON *has sunk down on the roadside, swaying his body.*)

1ST STRANGER. Is this the path leading to the house of Fatach Mor the Giant?

SIMON. It is—I believe.

1ST STRANGER. Is it far?

SIMON. It is not.

1ST STRANGER (*to others*). Come on so, we'll be there as soon as the Grugach of the Humming.

2ND STRANGER. He came sooner than was thought. It is a wedding in a hurry it will be.

1ST STRANGER. It may be there will be no wedding at all in it. They were telling me below in the drinking tent, it has failed the Giant to find him a wife.

2ND STRANGER. It is a bad man to anger he should be. It is to cut the head off of the guests he might.

1ST STRANGER. No but another was saying the Hag of Slaughter has taken it in hand, and her promise given to find him one that will be to his liking.

2ND STRANGER. So long as the supper is ready and the music, we are all right, bride or no bride. I'll chance it. Come on.

(SIMON *gives a low keen.*)

1ST STRANGER. What is on you?

SIMON. Enough of trouble is on me, where the King's son of Ireland is after meeting with his death.

1ST STRANGER. Is that so! The King's son dead?

SIMON. In this far foreign place. No one to keen him or to lay him out, because of his own people being far away.

1ST STRANGER. We will turn aside and go three steps with the corpse.

SIMON. It is a good way from this, a half a day's journey—in the wide middle of a bog.

1ST STRANGER. We cannot go so far. We have to be at the Giant's house by supper-time.

SIMON. What signifies, what signifies? It is not company he will want going home to the Court and Castle of the King. All the strands of Ireland will be fretting after him till they will go down and be lost under the tide. But to leave him the first night with no one to wake him, in the wide middle of a bog!

1ST STRANGER. Are there no neighbours to call in?

SIMON. Turf-cutters and chair-makers I could call, and I having food and drink to give them. But I never would be willing to call any one to a hungry wake!

2ND STRANGER. I will give you something for that and welcome. Here is meat and bread.

SIMON. To lay him out I would wish as a King's son—a bag of gold under his head, a bag of silver under his feet.

STRANGERS. Here, take this, and this, and this (*they give him*

money) for the King of Ireland's sake. If it was not for dread of the Grugach and the Giant we would travel with you every foot of the way. (*They go.*)

SIMON (*calling after them*). It is not losing money you are, giving it this time! It is well it will be remembered in Ireland. (*Sound of crows cawing as they go away.*) Go on with your cawing, ye thieves of the air! Is it looking for the dead prince ye are? Is it that ye will tell that story out to the world at large?

WITCH (*coming in dressed as a harper*). Who is it you are waiting for, Bird-Alone?

SIMON. My master that is gone fowling. He is not gone far. Why now are you yourself and your harp going away from the great feast, and every other one facing towards it?

WITCH. So I was in it. I will maybe go back after a while.

SIMON. What way is the Giant?

WITCH. Middling only. I heard some talk of a fight he had.

SIMON. Sure it is with my own master he had it. It was my master beat him. It is on the head of an apple the fight was.

WITCH. He is letting on he won the day.

SIMON. What way did he win the day when he did not win the golden apple?

WITCH. Has your master got the apple with him yet?

SIMON. He has, to be sure. Where it was before, within in the pocket of his body-coat.

WITCH. He should be tired with all he went through.

SIMON. He is, and spent. His heart will rise when he has food taken. It is a great pity they left me no wine.

WITCH. You can buy it down below. There is wine and beer selling in a little cabin made of green branches to refresh the people are on their way to the Giant's feast.

SIMON. I wouldn't wonder but they'd want it, the Giant's wife being no great housekeeper.

WITCH. Go on now for it.

SIMON. Here is my master coming. (RURY *comes.*)

RURY. All I got was this cormorant. (*Throws it down.*)

SIMON. That much wouldn't take the hunger off us. See now am I a good forager on the road! See what I got myself, with no weapon at all—only lies. (*Gives him food.*) I will go now get wine that will hearten you.

RURY. Let you hasten so. We have enough of time lost. (SIMON *goes.*)

WITCH. I will rise a tune now for you, King of Ireland's son.

RURY (*lying down on the grass and eating*). I never refused music up to this; but let it be a short tune. (WITCH *lays down harp, it begins playing of itself.*)

WITCH (*in a drowsy tone*). Play, little harp of willow wood, that lived sleepy with love of your own likeness and your shadow in the stream—— Play on! Give the Prince rest for a while. Play every one of you, strings (*she waves her hands over* RURY) that were drawn from the beasts rocking in the slumberous sounds of the sea. Play a little song would put him in his sleep through the sawing of timber in a pit, or the screeches from the Island of Cold. (RURY *sleeps profoundly.* WITCH *kneels and searches his clothes. She gets up.*) It is not here! The apple is not here! They are all deceiving me! The Giant is deceiving me; he has maybe got it in his house. I'll tear it from his keeping! I'll master him! (*She rushes off, leaving harp, which goes on playing softly.*)

(MUIREANN *comes in. She has her arms out as if distracted. She is dressed in rich clothes.*)

MUIREANN. Where is he? Where is he? Where is Rury, my darling that is dead?—— Oh! He is there! The crows of the air were telling no lie saying you were dead and gone! (*She keens and makes her lament.*) Oh, Rury! Oh, my first love! My first darling of the men of the world! There is no night in the year I would not burn a penny candle looking at your beauty! It is what I will be bringing with me from this out, the full of my two shoes of sorrow!

The first day of summer will come, the first day of winter will come. Every bird will come back to its own nest, but Rury my darling will not come back to me for ever!

It is a withered world it is! It is not long I will stay living in it. I to be left my alone, the same as the last tree of a wood! Let the two of us be laid in the one grave!

Good-bye to you, my five little fishes. (*She takes fishes which are tied in a bunch hanging by her waist.*) I am thinking you will not live after me. It is near a pity I did not leave you where you were in the well. My grief! If I had but the loan of a little silver lake!

SIMON (*coming back*). The King of Spain's daughter! What in the world wide brought you here, ma'am, and what is it ails you?

MUIREANN. The birds overhead that told me the King's son of Ireland was dead.

SIMON. You grew to be very skilful picking knowledge from the air.

MUIREANN. What are you yourself doing, not to be crying and

keening him? It is a bad friend and a bad servant you are letting him die! You to have had the smallest wound in the world, he would have searched out herbs of healing to put round about you. Why did it fail you to go search the whole face of the world for a cure for the King's son?

SIMON. Is it that you think it is to die he done? He did not, but a fit of slumber that came upon him.

MUIREANN. Why did the birds say it?

SIMON. Chatterers they are, running telling that I said him to be dead. If I did, I was letting on all the time.

MUIREANN. You had no right even for a playgame to say out such a terrible thing!

SIMON. I not to have said it, it is likely it would be true before this. I gave out his death for to keep life in him.

MUIREANN. He will not move. What way can I believe you?

SIMON. He is but getting his quiet and his comfort in a fit of slumber that came on him after eating his meal. There is no harm at all in that. The sleep is the health of all. He to be awake, there is no knowing what battle or fight he might be in!

MUIREANN. It fails me to waken him in any way.

SIMON. I wouldn't wonder if it was the playing of that harp. (*Takes it and covers with a cloak.*) More enchantments! I having a bit of tow in my ear against the toothache it did not take the same effect upon myself.

MUIREANN. Waken, Rury! You will waken when you hear my voice!

SIMON (*shaking him*). Rise up now and see who is before you!

MUIREANN. Listen, listen, I am in great danger. It is the Witch that dragged me as far as this. She bade me put on good clothes—— She said it was to meet you I was coming. And then——

SIMON. What plan had she in her head?

MUIREANN. Rury! Waken! Help me! I heard her telling some person a while ago she was bringing me to be a wife to the Grugach that her own daughter had refused to wed.

SIMON. The curse of the crows on her! Isn't she the black villain!

MUIREANN. She left me under a bush of shelter in the valley beyond; it is there I heard the talk of the birds. She will be coming back. Rise up now out of your sleep!

SIMON. Rise up, indeed. I am in dread the Giant is not asleep.

MUIREANN. Did I give you my love and will you fail me? (*He moves.*) (*A roar is heard.*)

SIMON (*looking down the road*). That is the Giant, sure enough. I partly guessed his roar.

MUIREANN. They are coming! Oh, save him if they take me! Cover him over with branches or with grass! Here I will put my golden mitten in your hand, that you will know I was with you——

GIANT (*coming in with* WITCH). Is it this one is to be given to the Grugach?

WITCH. It is. Let him take her or leave her.

GIANT. It is easy matchmaking there will be, and she to be put into my hand.

WITCH. There is the King's son in his sleep on the grass.

GIANT. I have nothing to say to him. I am under bonds not to do him hurt or harm. Let him sleep on through the length of the year.

WITCH. Bring away the girl so.

GIANT. Well now you have spared me a good deal of trouble. She has a lovely face. (*To* MUIREANN) Come on now.

MUIREANN. Do not bring me away! Leave me here! I would sooner go to my death.

GIANT. The guests are come and the tables are spread. There is nothing wanting, only yourself. I will lift you into the air the same as a wisp of straw. (GIANT *and* GIRL *go.*)

MUIREANN (*heard calling*). Rury! Rury! Rury!

RURY (*stirring*). Who is that calling me?

SIMON. The Lord be praised he didn't waken sooner. He'd be made an end of surely, and he to go following after them the way he is.

RURY. There was some one calling me by my name.

SIMON. Ah! It was dreaming you were, or listening to the grasshoppers in the grass.

RURY. I am certain I heard a call. It was nearly like Muireann's voice.

SIMON. It is close to the fall of night. Come on now on your journey.

RURY. Muireann! How happy I would be if I was going back to her now—to find her by the brink of the well.

SIMON. Is it that you are forgetting the King that is watching the windows till he will see you come?

RURY. You are right. I must go on to him. I will give him the cure. I will set out again the very same day.

SIMON. You might or you might not. Every new meeting is a new bargain. I would be wary of going back again into the Witch's

garden, where she might chop a tree against your life. It might be best find some other young beauty on our own side of the world.

RURY. I have but to give him the apple of healing. I can turn my back then, my message being done.

SIMON. Fatach Mor had a great opinion of himself, thinking to take it from you.

RURY. Where is it? I put it in here——

SIMON. It was in no other place. (*They search.*) A sore heart and cold flesh on them! As sure as you are standing there, they have the apple whipped.

RURY. The Witch, or Giant, or whoever took it must have snapped it away as quick as a hawk.

SIMON. As sure as you live it was stole by that little cannat of a doctor. It is going through me that he was near us at that fight.

RURY. It might be so. I thought I saw some unkind face through my faint. But why would he rob it?

SIMON. To bring it home to the King I'll engage, and to let on he to have won it himself. It's best for us hurry on after him by the shortest road, that is here by this path to the west.

RURY. We should overtake him if we travel on through the night.

SIMON. We'll make a start anyway.

RURY. Give me my sword. What is that on it? A little golden mitten——

SIMON. So it is too.

RURY. It was Muireann left it here. She was surely here in this place.

SIMON. It might have come in some other way.

RURY. It was her call I heard! Where is she? You know, and you do not tell me! She was here when I was asleep!

SIMON. Leave choking me! If I did not tell you it was for your good. You are no way fit to go fighting. If you have no wish to be scalded it's best not go stir the pot.

RURY. Where is she? Tell me or I will drive the life out of you!

SIMON. The Giant that brought her away to his castle.

RURY. Why did he do that?

SIMON. It was that Hag of Wickedness put her into his hands.

RURY. What made her do it?

SIMON. She gave her to be bride to the Grugach of the Humming, that her own daughter was after refusing to wed.

RURY. Oh, my first love! I am coming! (*He goes following her.*)

SIMON. I would give the full of Ireland of horned cattle, the lad never to have learned the nature of love!

SCENE IV. *Night. Outside Giant's castle. A lighted window. Guests seen inside and music heard.*

(RURY *and* SIMON *come on.*)

RURY. It is up there she should be at the supper.

SIMON. It would be hard come to her. There is a great troop of men having steel suits on them beside the door.

RURY. I will break my way through them.

SIMON. What way could you do that, and they that close as that they are touching one another?

RURY. If I have to kill them I will do enough of killing! I will make heaps of their feet and of their heads.

SIMON. You would be no better off. You to lay a hand on the young lady it is likely the Hag has put spells on her that she would go from you like a bird into the air.

RURY. If I could but bring her down out of that and steal her away——

SIMON. Here is some person coming out the door; he maybe would give us news of her.

RURY. It is but a cook from the ovens.

SIMON. If he is, he might be no bad friend.

RURY (*to* COOK). What is it that is going on inside?

COOK. It is a great wonder you not to know this is the night of the great wedding. A grand quality dinner that is in it. The freshest of every meat, the oldest of every drink, the food you think of and the food you would not think of. Myself and the rest of the cooks are destroyed making and baking and with the want of sleep.

SIMON. I never saw much in that house. You'd get more plenty of a fast day in the King of Ireland's servants' hall, and you but a party of one.

RURY. Are there many in it?

COOK. There are that. The Grugach out from Scotland and two of his first cousins. Fatach Mor is but a chicken beside them.

SIMON. He has a bad name that Grugach of the Humming.

COOK. He'd be a bad one to cross or go against. But as they are now, himself and the Giant are as great as two pickpockets. Sure it is the Giant has found a wife for him.

RURY. She will not wed with him.

COOK. If she does it will not be of her own fancy. Any lady in Ireland that would rear a son to that one would be sorry.

RURY. Does she seem to be fretting?

COOK. She looks as if she would sooner to go drown herself than

to be joined to the like of him. She was crying a while ago, but they have her sorrow hid with the dint of the music they have raised.

SIMON. The Grugach now, is he striving to come around her and to comfort her?

COOK. He is not. He is picking the bones of a deer. He'll have time enough to tame her. Himself and his men will bring her away to-morrow in their fleet of ships to Lochlann, or some place in the North.

RURY. Will you carry a message to her?

COOK. I cannot do that. I have to go trying the ovens. There is not a tint of bread left in the place. That I may be forgiven for the lies I told! It is the hungriest feast ever I saw.

RURY. I have here three cakes of bread. Will you bring them in and give them to the young queen?

COOK. I will not. It is a kish full of them I would want to satisfy those.

RURY. I would give you a good reward.

COOK. What use would it be to me, and I after being made an end of maybe by the Giant or the Hag of Slaughter, where they would think me to be making a mockery of them.

RURY. Give me your clothes and I will bring them up myself.

COOK. Give me the reward and I will.

RURY. Give him out money from your purse.

SIMON. Is it to hide yourself under a cook's suit you think to do?

RURY. That is the way I will go unknownst through the door.

COOK. It is short till they will make an end of you and they to recognise you. A great troop of the Grugach's people there are; Fawgauns and Blue Men.

SIMON. I'm in dread that by the walk of you they will know you to be one used to giving orders.

COOK. Let the clothes be put on yourself, so, that is more of my own shape and build.

SIMON. I don't care. I'll engage no one will lay down that I am not a cook. I'll go in, sooner than send my master to his death.

COOK. Here now. I'll rub a grain of flour on your face.

(SIMON *puts on smock and cap.*)

RURY. Give her the cakes into her hand—whisper in her ear to come down as if to take the air. I will bring her away in a crack.

COOK (*to* RURY). Go back now, let no person see you watching here.

RURY (*going off*). She will know the three honey-drops on the cakes.

SIMON. Is it to knock at the door or to blow the horn I should?

COOK. Not at all, but to walk in fair and easy and they will not question you. (COOK *goes off.*)

((SIMON *is going towards door; the men at it fall back.* WITCH *comes out in full dress.*)

WITCH. What is your business here?

SIMON. A cook. I am one of Fatach Mor's cooks.

WITCH. What is that in your hand?

SIMON. Three caraway cakes they are, I have to bring to the young queen of the feast.

WITCH. Take care is there honey on them?

SIMON. Why wouldn't there be honey?

WITCH. The hall that is guarded with a swarm of very wicked bees.

SIMON. Do you say so?

WITCH. You can nearly hear their buzz. To go wild mad at the smell of honey they do. They will settle themselves down upon your hands and your eyes and your head.

SIMON. There is nothing I am in so great dread of as bees.

WITCH. It is best for you to wash the honey from off the cakes.

SIMON. I am loth to meddle with them.

WITCH. Go on so. There is one of the Blue Men after drowning himself in the stream, where he had hid a piece of a honeycomb within his cap. To crawl in they did under his steel suit.

SIMON. What way can I wipe it off?

WITCH. Here is a handkerchief; it was dipped in soapy water.

SIMON. That's it. (*He wipes off honey.*) Is there anything of the smell of it left on the cakes?

WITCH. I will bring you in now. The bees will take no notice of you at all. (*They go in.*)

(RURY *comes back, looks up at window.* MUIREANN *has come near it. Music is being played.* SIMON *hands her the cakes; she looks at them, then pushes them away.* SIMON *comes out from the door.*)

SIMON. I brought the cakes to her.

RURY. I saw that, and she would not take them. Did she say nothing?

SIMON. She did not, and no wonder. Believe me, it is a very strange company she is in.

RURY. Did she take notice of the honey-drops on the cakes?

SIMON. The honey-drops?

RURY. That were from her fingers she laid upon them?

SIMON. You had a right to tell me that sooner.

RURY. Why do you say that? What happened them?

SIMON. To wipe them off I did at the bidding of a queen-woman, that said I would be tackled and made an end of by a swarm of angry bees.

RURY. Will you never learn to know the Hag of Slaughter?

SIMON. For pity's sake! There is no beating that one for plans. It is a wonder that she, having hundreds of years, can go through the world as she does!

RURY. I will go in to Muireann myself.

SIMON. It's no use for you; it's not by weapons you'll reach to her, but by wit. If you wish to bring her down to where you are, give out mouth-music on the pipe.

RURY. That is a good thought. (*He plays Eileen Aroon on pipe.* MUIREANN *comes and stands at window, looks out, then turns to the door.*)

SIMON. There she is coming.

RURY. I will go meet her.

SIMON. Have a care!

RURY. I am done with carefulness. (*Goes towards door playing still.* TWO MEN *suddenly step behind and fling a cloak over his head, throw him down and drag him away.* SIMON *rushes to shadow at side.*)

MUIREANN (*coming out from door*). Rury! Rury! Where are you! (*She comes forward, her arms outstretched.*) Save me! Save me!

WITCH (*coming behind her and touching her arm*). Do you think to escape me so easy?

MUIREANN. I will escape! The King of Ireland's son is here. He will save me out of your hand.

WITCH. He will not. He never will stretch a hand to you again or look at you with love in his eyes.

MUIREANN. That is a lie! You cannot change him, you have no power over him! It is he will put you down and make an end of you when he will hear my story!

WITCH. You will have no voice from this out to tell a story, or to give out any news good or bad.

MUIREANN. Oh! What is it—— Let me go! Rury!

WITCH. Did you think to make little of me that have worked spells from the early days of the world? (*She holds up a disguise with cat's head and paws.*)

MUIREANN. What are you doing?

WITCH. I put that shape on you through the power of earth that holds and that nourishes all shapes of beasts and of men!

(WITCH *is about to strike her with one of the three rods, but* MUIREANNN *rushes away from her through the gateway.* WITCH *follows her and a cry is heard outside. The men who took* RURY *away drag him back again, leavng him on the ground.*)

RURY (*starting up and throwing off cloak from his head*). Where is she? Where is my darling and my love?

SIMON (*coming forward*). Where is she indeed?

RURY. Did she come out the door?

SIMON. She did so.

RURY. Which side did she go? (MUIREANN, *disguised as a cat, creeps in at gate and goes to hide in shadow.*)

SIMON. It's best for you go seek her outside the gate.

RURY. You are certain she has gone out?

SIMON. She came down out of the house anyway. You can look around and see is she in this yard.

RURY. She might be hiding in the wood without.

SIMON. Come on so. The supper is over, those giants will be scattering themselves in search of her. Come on.

RURY. I will find her if I have to go back to the Garden on the Edge of the World every step of the way. (*Goes towards gate.*)

MUIREANN (*rushing up to him*). Miau! Miau!

RURY (*shaking her off*). Hoosh! Hoosh! Get away out of that! I am in no humour for cats!

Curtain.

ACT III

SCENE I. *The Garden. The tree is withered.* MUIREANN *and* GARDENER. *She has taken off cat's head and paws and holds them in her hands.*

MUIREANN. That is my story so far, and that is the cruelty was put upon me by the Witch.

GARDENER. Death and defeat on her! But what way now does it chance you to speak natural?

MUIREANN. There comes around from Heaven one day in the week, and one hour in that day, when there sounds through the air the Bell of the Saints out in Ireland, that has power to break for me the Witch's knot. And for that relief I give thanks to the King of Sunday.

GARDENER. The Lord be praised for that much of reprieve.

MUIREANN. Listen and you will hear that sweet, holy sound!

(*A distant peal of bells heard.*)

GARDENER (*taking off hat*). That it might go on for ever!

MUIREANN. But oh! What do you say hearing my case? Every time that hour comes around, the man that is my darling is not at hand!

GARDENER. The grasshoppers are hundreds of years old and have heard a great deal of talk, and they never knew so great a pity!

MUIREANN. O Gardener! what shall I do at all, at all?

GARDENER (*looking in the well*). Did you bring back the five little fishes itself safe and sound?

MUIREANN. My grief! When they saw me in the form of a cat they were in dread and affrighted. They went from me with a leap into a little freshwater stream. It is likely they are lost and swallowed up ere this by the beasts of the great ocean.

GARDENER. The poor little silvery things.

MUIREANN. Going from me, they left me as lonesome as that you never saw the like.

GARDENER. No wonder at all in that.

MUIREANN. It is my sorrow the Witch did not turn me to be a duck, the way I could sail along with them.

GARDENER. If Rury the King's son would but come!

MUIREANN. Oh! You have knowledge! Cannot you so much as rub me with a magic stone, or boil down an herb to take the enchantment from me?

GARDENER. So long as she owns those Three Rods of Mastery her power is stronger out and out than mine.

MUIREANN. Then I am lost and under disgrace for ever.

GARDENER. Bad cess to her, and that she may have her face to the storm whatever wind will blow!

MUIREANN. O Gardener! I that never drank out of a cup not having at the least a silver rim, look at me now the way I am!

GARDENER. The King's son to come he will relieve you.

MUIREANN. It is certain at one time he loved me—— Yet to know he was coming, I would go hide myself in the fold of a hill—

or my heart would break in me like a nut. It is bad the way I am! It is best for me waste and wither away!

GARDENER. He is the only one can save you.

MUIREANN. It would be better for me have gone to my death the time he gave me his love, than to be turned into a thing displeasing to him. Sorrow was never in it till now! I have a bad way in the day and in the night time. It is a bad case I to be that way. There is a road love leads to, and it is that brought me under disgrace. It was not right of the witch-woman! It would be better for me be under the sod than he to come meet me, and to see but the ugly grey face of a cat!

GARDENER. He would recognise you in spite of all, and would know it to be but spells.

MUIREANN. O Gardener! It is what happened. When I came before him and strove to call to him, I could give but the cry of the beast I am under the shape of. He was angry, he hooshed me off. O Rury, it was not from you I deserved it! I left a drop of my heart's blood in that place!

(PAMPOGUE *comes*.)

PAMPOGUE. God save all here except the cat!

GARDENER. It would be more fitting a young person to be kind.

PAMPOGUE. The next time the King of Ireland's son will come, it is to myself he will give his love.

MUIREANN. It is not the time to show me unkindness when my heart is closed up with trouble.

PAMPOGUE. They are saying the little fishes did not trust you.

GARDENER. That is no way to be talking.

MUIREANN. It is not the King of Ireland's son will forgive you for that treatment.

PAMPOGUE. What call have you to kings unless it might be the King Cat of the Western Island, that has you under his rule from this out?

MUIREANN. My thought is free to go where it likes, and to my own father that is a King.

PAMPOGUE. What way could you sit and eat at his table? A four-footed thing! It is a red mouse with the fur on it would be your choice dish.

GARDENER. That is beyond all measure!

PAMPOGUE. You have your own business to attend to. Herself sent this out for you to put up on the tree.

(*Gives him board with writing.*)

GARDENER (*putting it up*). What is it is written on it? The sight that is failing on me.

PAMPOGUE (*running off*). It is but to scare blackbirds.

MUIREANN (*looking at it*). It is an offer of a fourpenny bit to any one that will kill a cat.

GARDENER (*throwing it down and stamping on it*). That she may be seven hundred times worse this time next year! That she may never be cross until she meets with her death!

(SIMON *comes in.*)

MUIREANN. Oh! Is your master here?

SIMON. We are after climbing the wall.

MUIREANN. Where is he?

SIMON. We travelled far. He is washing the sweat from his flesh, and the dust.

MUIREANN. Oh, if he could see me while I am this way he would not turn from me!

GARDENER. Is it down at the stream to the west he is?

SIMON. I couldn't be rightly sure. It's best go seek him there.

GARDENER (*to* MUIREANN). Go search for him before the ringing of the bells will stop. (*She goes.*) That's right. It is Rury will take her case in hand.

SIMON. It would be best for him leave meddling with any haunted people at all.

GARDENER. A well-reared girl; a great beauty. It is well for him get her for a companion and a wife.

SIMON. It might. I would sooner a woman you would trust to go to the dairy to bring you in a drop of cream.

GARDENER. She that had a little blush upon her cheek was redder than the royal rose! It would make you sorry the way she is now, fretting and bare alone.

SIMON. It is the King's son I am in charge of.

GARDENER. She is as nice as you'd ask. A very mannerly little girl. They match one another as well as two ears of wheat.

SIMON. I never would like cats, if it was a whole fleet of them was in it.

GARDENER. You are talking like an innocent or a fool. You know well until this spell was put upon her she was an honest, proper woman. I never saw one so nice, or with such a coaxing way.

SIMON. I would sooner nearly to take the Witch's daughter that is natural, if she is cross itself. To go with a strange thing would put back your children.

GARDENER. She will be the same as before, and the enchantment taken off of her.

SIMON. I would not wish him to marry a cat-woman and she having a pound for every day of the year, or a divide of the three divides of the world, the same as Marcus Crassus or Pompey of the Plain.

GARDENER. He is in pieces about her. His soul is gone into her. You know that well.

SIMON. He is ignorant of what she is presently.

GARDENER. He is death down on her.

SIMON. The sickness of love is all one with madnesss that is put on us by the moon. He would be cured with one scrape of her paw. Crooked hooks on her hands, and maybe a poison-claw at the tip of her tail. A very troublesome life.

GARDENER. They are coming! She has found him!

SIMON. What way did she do that I wonder, and I after sending her west?

GARDENER. No, but it is Pampogue is with him.

(RURY *and* PAMPOGUE *come in.*)

RURY (*to* PAMPOGUE). Have you no news to give me?

PAMPOGUE. I have not, unless you will give it to me yourself.

RURY. It dreams to me that I saw her in the trees beyond and then she was gone like a little breeze of wind.

PAMPOGUE. She is gone out of this. You will not find her.

RURY. I will find her. I will ransack every corner of the earth. I will go following after her for ever.

PAMPOGUE. Why would you not stop with myself? I will give you all my riches and my estate. You will never know trouble any more.

RURY. From the west of the world to the freshness of the world I will search for her in every place!

PAMPOGUE. You will never find the woman will give you love the same as myself.

RURY (*calling out*). Muireann! Muireann!

PAMPOGUE. I gave up a great match for your sake. I took my seven oaths I would take no other man. (*Takes his hand.*)

RURY. Let go of me! I have it in my mind you did away with her yourself, or the Hag, your mother! I give you my word if you handle and hinder me I will strike off your head with my sword (*She cries out and runs off.*)

(*To* GARDENER) It is you gave me a bad advice bidding me leave her in this place. Tell me, where is she now?

GARDENER (*tries to speak but cannot for a moment*). My tongue that is turned to stone when I strive to tell the secrets that are outside the world.

RURY (*to* SIMON). Did you see no sign of her?

SIMON. You will never come to her. You will never get her in hardness or in softness; without or within; on horseback or on foot. It is as good for you give up the search.

RURY. What was it happened when she came out the Giant's door? What did I bring her to, playing her little pipe? It is here beside the well I first saw her. The worst thing in the world to me now is to see my own shadow, and it alone!

GARDENER. It is in the well you will maybe see her shadow again.

RURY (*kneeling by it*). Come back to me, and it will be a garden again, and not a place of nettles and elder and corncrakes. My grief that I left you for one moment only! It is long to me the night is and the day! (MUIREANN *comes behind him and bends over his shoulder*). There is your very image down below——your shape and your features—— there is a mist of water between us—— And oh, I have a mind to throw myself in after you, and we will be a King and a Queen for ever in Land-Under-Wave, and I will forget father and country, and all that is before me and all that is behind! And if I would do that for the sake of your shadow, what would I do for yourself?

MUIREANN (*in a whisper*). Rury! (*The bells stop of a sudden.* WITCH *appears behind* MUIREANN *and drags her back behind trees, putting cat's head back on her.*)

RURY (*starting up*). Where are you? Muireann! (*A miau is heard.*) Where is she? I saw her in the well. I heard her voice. I am certain she was here. Where is she? (*Another miau from back.*) It was a vision. That cat broke it with her miauing. No, no, she was here—— I will go search. (WITCH *comes before him.*)

WITCH. Have you lost from your mind the man that is watching for you out in Ireland?

RURY. I will go back to him after I will come up with her.

WITCH. To-day that is Lady Day in Harvest, in the yellow moon of the badger. What day was it you set out from Ireland?

SIMON. This day year for the world!

RURY. That cannot be! We have not been travelling through the length of a year.

WITCH. You did not feel the time passing when you went stumbling on from the Wood of Wonders, or when you were in an enchanted sleep.

RURY. I will go. I must go back to my father.

SIMON. Where is the use going home to the very day, where you are without the apple for his cure?

RURY. I will go without it. I will confess my disgrace. I will not fail him where I gave my word. Let him put on me whatever punishment he will.

SIMON. Sick or sound he will make you welcome. It is likely he will smother you with kisses unless he will drown you in tears. (*To* GARDENER) And he to have gone out itself and he lying in his lone at Corcomroe, it is my own master that will get the sway!

RURY (*to Gardener*). Give me some swift way to go home.

SIMON. Let it be a safe way. I have no swim to cross the sea, unless I'd make a boat of my hat.

GARDENER. Herself that could put a swan-gander between your legs, or shape a flying ship out of two cross sticks.

WITCH (*to* GARDENER). Pull up for them two stalks of the Bohilaun, the horses of the Sheogue. (*He brings two stalks of yellow rag-weed and gives one to* RURY, *one to* SIMON.)

SIMON. Is it a yellow horse will be under me, and it having four green legs?

WITCH (*to* RURY). A golden saddle on his back and a silver bridle on his head, he will bring you coursing through the skies as swift as the sun and moon. (*Pushes them off.*)

PAMPOGUE (*coming and looking round*). It is you sent him away!

WITCH. If I did, it was to save you from refusal and from shame.

PAMPOGUE. You got your own share of the joy of the world, and now you begrudge me my own! The seven deaths upon you!

WITCH. Have a care! The senses are gone astray on you.

PAMPOGUE. That I may never see you again! It is ugly you are to me whatever shape you may put on! I tell you I will have that young man, by paying or by prayers! Let you give me up your treasure to buy him; you have the world to ramble, begging from door to door!

WITCH (*holding up rods*). If you let one more word out from your mouth I will strike you with these Rods!

PAMPOGUE (*snatching them*). It is long enough you have been spreading terror with these Rods and bringing myself no profit with them! That your luck may go backward from this out! (*Flings them away.*)

(GARDENER *stoops swiftly and takes them.* WITCH *stumbles and sits down, her head in hands.*)

SCENE II. *The King's Court as before. The* KING *is propped up in his bed, looking from window.* SERVANTS *with him.*

KING (*to* SERVANT). Is there e'er a sign of him coming?

SERVANT. There is not.

KING. The delay is very heavy on me. It is a year since he went out, and a day.

SERVANT. It is a long time we are without tale or tidings of him.

KING. I am very sure he will come. If it was not for that I would die over.

SERVANT. It isn't easy bring yourself in the door to the very day of the month.

KING. He will come if he is on the ridge of the world. He not to be here by the heel of evening I will know he has found his harbour in Oilean-na-Marav, that is the Island of the Dead.

SERVANT. There is not one but wishes him to be back. No life in the place and no courage. No drinking or feasting or giving out rewards.

KING. What time is it now?

SERVANT (*looking out*). By the shadow under the yew tree it should be on the stroke of noon. (*Horn heard and bustle.*)

KING. There he is come! I knew well he would not fail. That sort is not in his breed, and he of the root-stock of kings.

SERVANT. I am well pleased he to have brought the cure.

KING. With or without the apple he will be welcome. Put now the chair here close beside me.

DOCTOR (*coming in*). I came in and the dust of the road upon me. I met with delays on my journey. I was in dread I might be late.

KING. Did he come with you? Rury my son?

DOCTOR. I came with myself only.

KING. Did you pass him on the way?

DOCTOR. I did not. Is it that he did not come?

KING. He not to be here, he is not living.

DOCTOR. I would sooner nearly that.

KING. Is it that you wish his death?

DOCTOR. Not at all, not at all. But I would not give an inch of my toe for a son that would forget his father.

KING. If he forgot me, my last end is come. It is likely death did not forget me.

DOCTOR. There is one did not forget you, and that man is myself. It is I will give you lengthening of life.

KING. You will try no more of your cures on me where the apple of healing did not come.

DOCTOR. The apple is here. (*Holds it up.*) It is I myself have brought it for your cure.

KING. The apple! Is that it in your hand?

DOCTOR. The golden apple from the Garden at the World's End.

KING. Give it here to me.

DOCTOR. Have a care. Do not be in so great a hurry.

KING (*taking a bite*). Why wouldn't I hurry and death being after my life like a hound after a hunted hare?

DOCTOR. It is to choke yourself you will.

KING (*coughing*). Cut it in small pieces, so.

DOCTOR (*cutting and giving him bits*). Fair and easy goes far in a day.

KING (*eating*). I would say it to be running through my veins—— It is going to the cockles of my heart—— (*Eats.*) I think I am out of the body and in the City of the Sun—— There is light going through me, and heat!

DOCTOR. That is the sap beginning to work. It is full up of the virtue of the Tree.

KING. Spring-time is come—— We are done with the nursing mother of the cold——

DOCTOR. Here is the heart of the apple, and the seeds——

KING. I feel in me the rising of the waves of Power.

DOCTOR. It is going through you the same as a flame.

KING (*sitting up. To* SERVANT). Go bid the cooks to put a tail end of beef to the fire, fat and tender. Let it be roasted rare.

SERVANT. It is long we did not hear an order the like of that. (*Goes.*)

KING. Bring here the barber. Let him put a face on me. Is there e'er a crumb left of the apple—or a pip——

(BARBER *comes with basin and soap, and begins to shave him.*)

DOCTOR. It is a world's wonder——He is gone backward in age——He looks elegant in the face——He shows out like a boy of fifteen years!

KING (*being shaved*). What way did you come to the apple?

DOCTOR. The voyage was very costly on me—but no matter. I came through it all in the end.

KING. No doubt but you saw great wonders.

DOCTOR. It is much that I escaped with my life——

KING. What sort is the Wood of Wonders? Is it as terrible as what they say?

DOCTOR. It is, to be sure.

KING. You should be a great warrior to get the better of the Hag of Slaughter—— Is it on a big tree the apple was?

DOCTOR. About the height of the house.

KING. What size was the Garden?

DOCTOR. Sizable enough—— Wait now and I'll tell you about the great fight I had with the great Giant, Fatach Mor.

KING. Is it that you fought with a giant?

DOCTOR. Wait till you hear——

KING. You had great courage.

DOCTOR. That was the fight! Blacker than a coal quenched in water he was, and having in every rib of hair the strength of a hundred men. It took me to tackle him!

KING. And did you put him down?

DOCTOR. He never was flogged before. He came at me as strong as the spring-tide! We made the hard soft and the soft into spring wells. The mountains that were far came and looked at us, and the mountains that were near moved away from us.

KING. That was a great battle!

DOCTOR. "Come on now," says he, "till I will put you under my long cold teeth." "Come on yourself," says I, "till I will make snuff of your bones!"

KING. Do you hear that! The bravery of him!

DOCTOR. We fought through three-quarters of the day till I put him down in the stones. He called out then for mercy. "It is much," says I, "if I give you your choice of two sods of earth to die on——"

KING. My grief I was not there to see the fight.

DOCTOR. With that I struck the head off him. It is much that I brought away my life, having laid the Giant dead!

KING. That is a great story. It will be told after the whole of us have left the world. And where at all at that time was Rury my son?

DOCTOR. You can ask some other person than myself. I never was one to be carrying stories.

KING. I leave my orders on you to tell out all that you heard.

DOCTOR. Ah! He's young! He's young!

KING. Mind yourself! I am getting back my strength! Speak out when I bid you.

DOCTOR. Oh, it's not much I heard. The people were saying he ran wild, rambling and courting—— He's young!

KING. Is it for rambling and courting he left me to go to my death?

DOCTOR. He maybe couldn't make his way home. They were

saying he had all his money spent, and that Simon the steward was tricking and telling lies on the road, striving to gather in more.

KING. He was maybe in need of it.

DOCTOR. So they were saying—— wild living. Giving out, the steward was, the King's son of Ireland was dead in the middle of a bog. Begging gold and silver he was for to furnish out the wake.

KING. Is it that he gave out I myself had no means to bury my son?

DOCTOR. It is but humbugging he was, to gain hand-money for himself and the young prince.

KING. That is queer humbugging to give out to the countries of the world that charity was needed to put a boarded coffin on the King of Ireland's son.

DOCTOR. Ah! the young do be apt to run random and they out foreign.

KING. I would sooner nearly he to be dead in earnest than to drag down my name the way he did! Let him keep out of this to his life's end!

(*A shout and music.*)

SERVANTS (*rushing in*). Prince Rury is at the door.

KING (*with a roar*). The young vagabond!

(RURY *and* SIMON *come in.*)

SIMON. Here we are now to the very year and a day!

RURY (*kneeling beside bed*). I ask your forgiveness, father.

KING. That is what you will not get.

RURY. It has failed me to bring the apple.

KING. So I see, and that you are come back empty.

RURY. My grief that it is so.

KING. Leaving me stretched on the bed, and dragging down my name by your doings! To go begging on the road, having scattered my gold and banished it! It is much that your head is not on the block!

RURY (*getting up*). That is the best sound I heard yet. The strength that has come into your voice.

KING. If I have strength, there is no debt on me to you. Ireland and the world waiting on you to bring me the cure, and you humbugging, and foxing death for your sport.

RURY. I never drew bridle or breath till I came back to you on this very day. I did all that a son can do.

KING. Tell out so the story of your doings.

RURY. Let the poets tell out stories of me in the time to come.

It is what I will never do myself, where you did not believe my first word.

SIMON. If he will not tell out his doings it is I myself will tell them out! He got the victory and the sway over the big Giant, Fatach Mor!

KING. You have that story robbed from the doctor.

SIMON. The doctor! Is it that he is in this place?

KING. Here he is beside me. It is through the courage and the kindness of that man I got the apple. He has put down the Giant and brought away the cure.

SIMON. I partly guessed it, and now I know it. It is the doctor, and no other, that was the thief!

DOCTOR. Stop your fool talk!

SIMON. Fool yourself! I am as good a story as you any day! To say he fought the Giant! A man that is no use at home or abroad—that is not worth an empty box of matches! Well, it is easier save yourself from a rogue than from a liary person. A man telling lies would disgust you!

DOCTOR. You are well able yourself to tell stories and lies.

SIMON. You tearing away our characters!

RURY. Come away out of this, where there is no welcome only for thieves.

KING. Whoever will say that, the head will be whipped off him!

RURY. I will not come back again till this flame of anger is burned out!

KING. You will not go out of this, so fiery and unruly as you are! It is in the prison you will be lodged and chained.

SIMON. Let the doctor be lodged there with us, and I'm content. I'll knock satisfaction out of him!

KING. The doctor! I would give him the kingdom as his reward, but that no man following his trade ever wore the crown of Ireland.

SIMON. And Rury to be thrown out and put back from what he has earned! I'm like the people that loses their mind and can't remember their memory.

DOCTOR. There is a plague of madness on him! Let him be tied by the five smalls!

KING. Bring them away! (*To the* GUARDS) Lodge Prince Rury and his comrade in the jail!

(*Takes* DOCTOR'S *arm and goes out door.* SIMON *is dragged towards other door.*)

SIMON. Oh! that doctor! Give me the trumpets of the guard till I'll draw down a curse and a poem of vengeance! A mist of mis-

fortune on you! Breaking and bruising on you! The curse of the weak on you, and of the strong! All the fevers ever you met with to be put running and racing through your blood! The curse of all you cured on you, and of all that you did not cure!

(*The cat* (MUIREANN), *which has come in, flies at* DOCTOR *and scratches him.* DOCTOR *calls out and rushes through door.*)

RURY. Any one would say that is the same cat was outside the Giant's castle the time I lost my secret love.

SIMON. Cat, is it? It is no cat she is! I will tell it out now she befriended us. It is the daughter of a King under spells she is. What do you say now, hearing that? (*Cat runs out.*)

RURY. A King's daughter—what is it? It could not be Muireann in that shape?

SIMON. The Witch that put it on her the way she would lose your love.

RURY. Oh, my love and my darling!—— Where is she—— Where is she gone?

SIMON. It is likely hiding from yourself she is. There is no woman would wish her bachelor to get a view of her, and she in a shape would not be pleasing to him.

RURY. My poor Muireann! My blossom of the branch!

GARDENER (*rushing in*). Where is the young queen?

RURY. She is but gone this very minute. O Gardener! did you hear what happened her?

GARDENER. I did, to be sure. It is that brought me here, to deliver her from the power of the Hag.

RURY. Can you do that?

GARDENER. Look at what I have in my hand. Her Three Rods of Magic and Mastery. It is with them I can take off the spell.

RURY. You can do that! I will go then and strike off the Witch's head.

GARDENER. She will be here within three minutes. It is easy to deal with her at this time. (*A miau heard outside door.*)

RURY. It is Muireann! (*Is going to door.*)

GARDENER. Stop where you are. It is I myself will bring her back. (*Goes out.*)

RURY. That Hag to come here, I'll put her in a way that she will enchant no more King's daughters!

SIMON. I'd ask no better than to be casting out to the wild dogs her three crooked bones. (*A low laugh heard.*)

RURY. That is my darling's little laugh!

SIMON. So it had a sweet sound.

(MUIREANN, *led by* GARDENER, *comes in wearing her fine clothes. She and* RURY *take hold of each other's hands.*)

RURY. Oh, Muireann! do I see you indeed? And what way did you come to me?

MUIREANN. The Giant that tied me in a bundle of green rushes and brought me here upon his shoulder. I was in dread I would scratch his face.

RURY. It was for my sake that trouble was put on you and that torment.

MUIREANN. And it was for your sake I parted with my little golden mitten!

RURY. Here I will put it on your hand.

(*Noise of people coming.* GIANT *and* WIFE *enter leading* WITCH *and* PAMPOGUE.)

SIMON. The Giant! Is it in pursuit of us he is?

WIFE. Not at all. It is time for him be getting wittier.

GIANT. It is a quiet Giant I am from this out.

WIFE. Just a common peaceable man. He wouldn't harm a child in a thousand years.

GIANT. To put myself under the King's protection I am come where the Grugach of the Humming is making threats, saying I have my contract with him broke.

RURY (*to* WITCH). This day will be the end of your plots and your enchantings, by whatever way you will be put to death.

SIMON. It would be right put her under the same shape she put on another.

GARDENER. Let the daughter be turned to a rat for her to be skivering with her claws.

WITCH. Do with me what you can do. But I ask mercy for the girl that is young.

WIFE. Give her here to me. We will want some one in the latter end of our days to mind us and to bring in a gallon of water, or a thing of the kind. I'll learn her to be a good slave and a good washerwoman.

GARDENER. She might get better senses yet. It is likely you will treat her better than the way she treated the young queen.

WITCH. If she must work out her punishment let it be a natural one. But let no enchanter ever give her long life, as there is little profit in it.

PAMPOGUE. You that are my mother, have been my enemy all through.

WITCH. In that I am your nearest friend. I gave you what I could, and little good it was to you.

RURY. You are right in asking no mercy for yourself.

WITCH. There is coming some change in the world, and why would I go on battling? I am tired remembering the string of years behind me, where I made no great hand of my life. (*She suddenly snatches the three rods from the* GARDENER.) I will leave my Three Rods of Mastery to no other one, or the joy of the seven spells! There——and there——and there—— (*She breaks them, tottering back to door.*) I that have been on the flood tide, I will not wait for the ebb, or live a woman without courage for ever! (*Goes.*)

GARDENER (*gathering up the pieces of rods and looking out after her*). With the breaking of the Rods her power is spent; all the years are come on her. There is nothing left of her on the flags but a little fistful of bones.

SIMON. Her like to be banished out of the world, they will be no miss. In one way or another she had us all but done away with.

(GUARDS *heard playing O'Donnell Abu outside.*)

GIANT. Is it that this is the King?

(KING, DOCTOR, *and* GUARDS *comes in.*)

KING. Are you here yet, my thief of a son?

RURY. Your son is here. It is on the other side of you is the thief.

KING. Have a care how you make little of the man that struck off Fatach Mor the Giant's head.

GIANT (*coming forward*). What is it he is saying he did?

DOCTOR. The Giant! (*Runs behind* KING.)

GIANT. Come out of that! (*Drags him forwards.*) Is it my own head that you struck off?

DOCTOR. Leave me! I never touched you, or harmed you at all.

GIANT (*shaking him*). Coming to look at the red of my tongue and to count the ticking of my pulse—— Telling me there was a worm within me, and it not being in it at all.

DOCTOR. Sure I had to tell you something.

GIANT. Promising me the golden apple for my cure, robbing it from the young King. Away with you, after leaving me no better than I was.

KING. Is it that you stole away the apple from my son?

DOCTOR. If I did, it was for your own healing.

KING. I know you now to be a very roguish man.

SIMON. Let him be put in the jail where we ourselves were to be lodged!

KING. I wouldn't darken the jail with him! Bring him away till

such time as my mind is made up will I send him attending lepers as a present to the King of the Bogs and Marshes, or will I hang him from a bridge in Dublin!

RURY (*putting hand on sword*). Who are these strangers coming in?

GARDENER (*bringing in five young men*). With the breaking of the Witch's Rods the charm rose out of the fishes. Here they are now before you, the sons of the King of Spain.

MUIREANN. Oh! Is it that these are my dear brothers!

1ST BROTHER. We are in our own shape at last.

MUIREANN. But——You were not so big——You were my little comrades and playfellows, and we rising——You are grown to be tall young men.

1ST BROTHER. It is seven years since then.

MUIREANN. Oh, you can speak to me at last in your own voice!

BROTHER. The most thing we have to say to you is Good-bye.

MUIREANN. You must stop for my wedding feast. You will not refuse me that?

2ND BROTHER. We will not indeed. You are deserving of every good thing.

MUIREANN. You will be going home then to Spain, where our father is at the end of his days?

1ST BROTHER. Not a fear of us! We have no mind for kings' courts. Aren't we after wearing out enough of our young life, closed up under water in a pond?

ALL THE BROTHERS. There is another cause——

2ND BROTHER. Whisper—— There are too many fast days in it and Fridays. We are in dread we would be asked to eat fish.

1ST BROTHER. We have the Witch's treasure to spend. It is to the Eastern world we will face, to go leaping on Arabian horses and fighting with the armies of the Greeks! (*They leap with joy.*)

KING (*to* RURY). What way can I make up to you at all for giving in to the doctor's lies?

RURY. I will be well content to see you enjoying long life and good health.

KING. It is likely indeed, if signs are signs, it is long till you will be handling Ireland. It is best for me give up the kingdom to you now, as it is well you earned it. You are sixteen times better than the lad that went out. Bog and meadow, fire and water, I will bestow it all upon you.

RURY. I will not take it, where I am well able to go out and win a country for myself.

MUIREANN. Why would you do that, and the whole kingdom of Spain being mine? (*He kisses her.*)

GIANT (*to* KING). To give me a gate-house or a thing of the sort, I could be of use lighting lamps in the streets or putting up scollops in the thatch. I am near tired telling lies.

SIMON. I am done with going to a foreign country. It is too long I stood upon a sod of wandering. I don't know do they be talking Irish out in Spain?

PAMPOGUE (*to* MUIREANN). Will you pardon and forgive me for all I did?

SIMON (*to* PAMPOGUE). They are taken up with themselves. Who knows but luck might turn to you? I might be looking for a companion for myself. It's a lonesome thing to be housekeeping alone!

Curtain.

THE STORY BROUGHT BY BRIGIT

PERSONS

JOEL. *A Boy from the Mountains.*
DANIEL. *A Tramp.*
MARCUS. *A Sergeant of Pilate's Guard.*
SILAS. *A Scribe in Caiaphas's Employment.*
PILATE. *The Roman Governor.*
JUDAS ISCARIOT.
ST. JOHN.
ST. BRIGIT.
1ST WOMAN.
2ND WOMAN.
3RD WOMAN.
1ST MAN.
2ND MAN.
1ST SOLDIER.
2ND SOLDIER.
3RD SOLDIER.
A YOUNG SCRIBE.
AN EGYPTIAN NURSE.
THE MOTHER.
THE CHRIST.
A CROWD.

ACT I

SCENE: *Outside the Gate of Jerusalem. Before the curtain goes up voices are heard singing:*

Bring every bough of the budding willow;
Strew every branch on the stony street.
He that has made the stones his pillow
Ready the road before his feet!

As the curtain rises, the three WOMEN *are seen strewing green branches as they go off.* DANIEL *is sitting at the Gate.* JOEL *is looking down the road, shading his eyes with his hand.*

JOEL. I think the time will never come when I will see him!
DANIEL. He should be near at hand. I could see the dust rising

when I was on the height above. There would seem to be a great throng of people following after him.

JOEL. He is worthy of it. The whole of the country is for him.

DANIEL. Ah, it's easy gather a crowd. There are always fools knocking about that would follow after anyone's whistle.

JOEL. They are no fools that follow after this man. They are saying up in the mountains it is himself has come to raise up the ruin of our people.

DANIEL. I've seen them come and seen them go. A great cry at the beginning for anyone with a big voice, and its likely all turning against him at the latter end.

JOEL. They will never turn against *him*. He is the leader we have been waiting for this long time. He will be our Prince and Captain, the same as Judas Maccabæus that rose up and fought for his nation.

DANIEL. Little he'll lead you to that will be of any use.

JOEL. Every use! To put out the Roman strangers and to take off their yoke. Haven't they enough of countries in their hand without coming ploughing through the sea for to meddle with our own?

DANIEL. And what call has this man preaching on the road to go meddle with them?

JOEL (*coming nearer*). Where was his birthplace? Isn't it foretold in the prophecies? "But thou Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judea, yet out of thee shall come a ruler in Israel! He will deliver you from your enemies. He will go through them, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep!" To give us our freedom.

DANIEL. Ah, freedom never put a penny in anyone's pocket. What is wanted is to do away with the rich, and to give their goods to the poor.

JOEL. "Instead of a bondwoman our country will become a free woman!"

DANIEL. Freedom how are you! The rich will be stiff and covetous, and the grabbers will grab all the same as at this day. But I'll give in that this Nazarene gave a good advice when he said, "If any man take away your coat let him have your cloak also." That hits at the wealthy ones that own a coat and a cloak along with it.

JOEL. Maybe so. They are saying it is the moneyed people are keeping up the foreign Government.

DANIEL. You would like to be listening to his talk, they were telling me, of the wealthy man that was sent to the flames of hell.

That's the chat! Let him frighten them with fire to their heels till they'll divide with us the riches they own.

JOEL. Ah, be quiet. You only want to grab for yourself. Little you care for the country or the nation.

DANIEL. It is you rebels are destroying us with all your foolish talk. I don't know what put it in your head at all.

JOEL. I heard rebellion talked ever and always and I a child, in the high mountains and on the low ground. Our country a ruin, our people scattered—

DANIEL. Sure enough the country is in tatters. It is hardly worth begging around for your bite, let alone striving to find the price of a drink.

JOEL. There can be no content until we send the foreign devils back to their own place in the North, or wherever Rome may be. They thinking it is crucifying the half of us will bring the rest of us kissing their hand. We'll put trembling in their heart yet!

DANIEL. You'll put yourselves in jeopardy, that's sure enough. And you never will have strength to stand against them.

JOEL. He that is in the prophecy, "a leader and commander of the people," will be well able to banish the whole drift of them.

(*The* WOMEN *come back.*)

1ST WOMAN (*to* JOEL). It will not be long now till you will see him. There was a sound brought upon the wind a while ago, like the noise of the little bees at their harvesting.

(BRIGIT *comes in from the gate. She wears a long cloak, and carries a staff. There is dust on her.*)

ST. BRIGIT. God save all here!

THE WOMEN. God save you kindly.

ST. BRIGIT. I am a stranger and astray in this place. All the people in the houses and in the street are running to and fro, as if preparing for the marriage or the crowning of a king. I could get no answer from them, or no word.

1ST WOMAN. You should be a stranger indeed, and not to know this is the day of preparation for the great feast of the Passover.

ST. BRIGIT. I am come from the West, from the edge of the great ocean. I have crossed land and sea; I have seen many a rising and setting of the sun.

2ND WOMAN. Oh, wasn't the journey long on you!

ST. BRIGIT. Winter came on me and the heat of summer, and winter again, till I hardly knew the seasons of the year, through the way they change according as I travel.

3RD WOMAN. It should be to look for some friend or some one of your kindred you are come?

ST. BRIGIT. It was in a dream or a vision of the night I saw a Young Man having wounds on him. And I knew him to be One I had helped and had fostered, and he a Child in his mother's arms. And it was showed me in my dream there would trouble come on him but in the end he would put gladness in the heart of His friends. And it was showed to me that the place where I would find him would be in this country of Judea, a long, long way to the east.

2ND WOMAN. And was it in your own country you had fostered him?

ST. BRIGIT. There came to my own country about thirty years ago a Young Woman that was seeking shelter and a hiding place for her Child. There was some wicked king looking for his life, some cruel man, one Herod.

JOEL. That is it. A cruel man he was, and left a bad name after him.

1ST WOMAN. It's likely enough he would have made away with the child. There was great talk of it at the time.

3RD WOMAN. And what way could a young child and his mother go travel beyond the waves of the sea?

ST. BRIGIT. It might be that an angel opened a path before them. A shining Messenger, and a Young Woman, and a Baby on her arm, and they so beautiful that all the people were crowding on them to see the beautiful people that were passing by.

2ND WOMAN. Thirty years ago. He should be a grown man now and in his bloom. Do you think could it be the Man we are waiting for to-day?

ST. BRIGIT. It may be so, but up to this time it has failed me to get any tidings of that Mother and that Child.

JOEL. It is he has power to free and to deliver his people. There will be a great welcome before him, and he coming into Jerusalem. You might hear the shouting a while ago, if you were outside of the city.

ST. BRIGIT. I thought to find him in the House of God that is there, for surely God Himself had a hand in him. And so I went into the Temple.

JOEL. You did not find him there.

ST. BRIGIT. It had more the look of a fair or a market than of a place of prayer. Cattle and sheep were in it, sellers and buyers, money-lenders calling out and cheating, barging and bargaining. No place for anyone that would come without money in the hand.

So I left it and came away. It had not the appearance of the Gate of Heaven.

1ST WOMAN. That is what our Master said a while ago—"My House should be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." And whatever it was then, it is seven times worse at this time of the preparation for the Feast.

3RD WOMAN. Sit down now and put off from you the weight of the journey, and you will see him when he comes to this place. (BRIGIT *sits down.*)

2ND WOMAN. He is coming nearer.

JOEL. No, he has stopped again. There are people around Him in droves. They are pressing on Him. There is one brought in a bed.

1ST WOMAN. They have brought him to our Lord for his healing. The shadows are beginning to lengthen, and they will never give him leave to pass the road.

3RD WOMAN. No doubt at all but he is a great Saint. I saw a lame man going to him on crutches, and after he had laid a hand on him he walked away cured, leaving the sticks after him.

1ST WOMAN. There was a man that had the eyesight lost—stone dark he was—brought to him, and going away he was as well able to find his way as any other person. He is not like the scribes and Pharisees that don't care if you died on the side of the road.

3RD WOMAN (*to* BRIGIT). Come hither where the road rises, and you might chance to get a sight of him.

ST. BRIGIT. If I see him you are speaking of, and that he is the same I fostered, it is a great story I will have to bring back to the West. I always knew when I looked at that child that he had on him the blessing of Heaven.

(*She and the three* WOMEN *go down the road.*)

DANIEL (*who has been looking in at the gate*). There are two I see coming have no good will, it is likely, towards that man that is walking the road.

JOEL (*looking in at the gate*). One of them would seem to be a Roman.

DANIEL. He is Marcus, that is Sergeant of the Guard to Pilate the Governor, and that was reared in his house, and is the keeper of his secrets and his keys. Come here, out of their way. (*They move aside.*) The other is Silas, a very crabbed man of the sect of the Pharisees, that is a scribe in the pay of Caiaphas, the High Priest, and that some give out is his spy. I see him going here and everywhere. Picking up news he is to bring his master. Come on now, I'd as lief get out of this.

(*As they go from the gate,* MARCUS, *an old man in soldier's dress, comes on, followed quickly by* SILAS, *who is middle-aged and fat.*)

SILAS. A fine day, Marcus, to be taking the air outside the gate. There is too much of noise and of dust within in the city.

MARCUS (*sitting down on the seat* DANIEL *has left*). I was looking at the throng in the streets for a while, flocking about, having carcasses of beasts in their hands. An outlandish sort of a sight.

SILAS. Making ready they are for the Passover.

MARCUS. Pilate himself was taking a view of them for a while from the steps of his palace. He laid down it was as laughable a thing as ever he saw in a circus.

SILAS. We'll get some ease from the cattle after this week. It is our great Feast of the year.

MARCUS. I wonder you yourself would be free to come out here, and you in Caiaphas's household. Your mind should be running on the killing of the lambs for your big day.

SILAS. That is not my work. I have plenty of time to go abroad in the air.

MARCUS. You'd want it. Well, it's not altogether for pleasuring I am here myself, but to see what way is order kept, and nothing taking place that would annoy the over-Government. You yourself should be able to tell me that much.

SILAS (*looking round*). Don't be talking here. You wouldn't know who might be listening.

MARCUS. Little I care what is heard of anything I have to say. The Roman Power is safe, whatever illwishers may do or think. What is this I am told about some new preacher or prophet that is risen up—one that they call the Nazarene?

SILAS. That is the very one is now coming up the road. It is likely you were not without hearing that much within the Governor's house.

MARCUS. I heard some talk that all your common people were cracked after him, and making much of him wherever he goes.

SILAS. There are some without sense that will run after anyone that is new and would loosen the commands of the law. An ignorant man! Paying no respect to learning! Would make nothing of breaking the ten commandments. You'll see Caiaphas will whip them in on the Feast days and bring them back to their duties.

MARCUS. There were some complaints made to us. But we are not here to protect your Jewish law but our own.

SILAS. That is where you make a great mistake. You have a right

to join with us on the side of keeping law and order. This man is disorderly and a vagabond, a cause of all mischief, a rascally rambler of the roads. Owing no respect to the religion was laid down for us by Moses. It is that vexes my heart! Our religion is not like your own that is slipping like a wall where it wasn't built solid —with all your heathenish gods!

MARCUS. There are some are saying this man you are running down is a messenger sent from your own Jewish God.

SILAS. That is blasphemy. He that goes eating and drinking with a low class that do not so much as wash their hands!

MARCUS. What have we to do with that? It is nothing that will bring our Government into danger.

SILAS. To keep the people within the four corners of the law of Moses will check the coming in of this mischief, and will give strength to your hands as well as to our own.

MARCUS. A good deal of your law could be broken without bringing any danger to the Empire of Rome.

SILAS (*angrily*). It's danger to the whole world the way he is going on! Making little of Solomon's Temple, saying that God does not dwell in houses made with hands! Breaking the Sabbath the way he does! He goes so far as to do his cures on that day the same as any other day.

MARCUS. No harm at all in that. I remember well that Sabbath day out in the villages when my own collar-bone was broken with the upsetting of the car upon the stones, and your Jewish doctor made an oath he would not put a hand to it until after the setting of the sun. We brought him to reason with a little prod of a sword. I laughed my fill, sore and all as I was, when he said it was forbidden by your law to so much as thread a needle on the Seventh Day. We paid him off, saying it was against our own law to give him any fee on the days that were under our own gods, and that was every day of the year!

SILAS. You will maybe think worse of him upsetting the customs of the State under a colour of charity. That is his aim and drift. What he calls the law of love, that he preaches, would leave the lawyers to starve, and the soldiers that idle they would run riot through the streets having no way to earn their pay! I don't like the way you are talking. To make little of what I am telling you is to make little of myself. If you have Pilate the Governor's ear, you have no right to be putting insults on my master's Scribe!

MARCUS. That's the way with you. You are always calling out against the Roman Government, and the minute you have a quarrel

with some one of your own people you come calling and craving for our help. Is it that he has an armed troop at his back?

SILAS. He has not, but a poor sort—tax-gatherers, process servers, fisher boys. He has put some sort of a spell on them. Is it that class you wish to see get the upper hand?

MARCUS. It is laid down that he bade them pay their tax to Cæsar.

SILAS. If he did I'll go bail it was through cunning, the way your Romans would not meddle with him, but leave him to nourish war and sedition. I saw a lad here at the gate this very minute that I have information is a noted rebel in his talk. A heady youngster from the hillsides, sworn to free the country from your rule.

MARCUS. Let him try that and welcome. Pilate is for policy and for patience. To tell the clean truth, a little Rising now and then is no harm at all. It gives us an excuse to get rid of disturbers and to bring more of our armies in. A Rising too is very apt to lead to splits, and splits are a great help when you want to keep a country down.

SILAS. All right so. Let him stir up discontent and turn the head of the ignorant women and men that believe him to be a messenger from heaven.

MARCUS. Be easy now. Pilate will keep an eye on him. He will do nothing to weaken your law, so long as it will help to keep the people quiet in his hand.

SILAS. Here they are coming. No, it is but one of his faction I have my eye on, one Iscariot. A class of a man I am told that would be wishing to do well for himself.

(JUDAS *comes from the road.*)

SILAS. Here now, what is this delay?

JUDAS. The people that are thronging him. He can hardly walk the road.

SILAS. Stop a minute.

JUDAS (*going on*). There is hurry on me.

SILAS. I bade you come and see me this morning.

JUDAS. I made no promise.

(*The* WOMEN *come back.*)

SILAS. Your Master will blame you if you refuse a piece of money for the bag.

1ST WOMAN. Indeed it is little our Master ever loses on himself.

2ND WOMAN. He is content with a wisp of rushes for his bed.

SILAS (*flinging a piece of silver to* JUDAS *as he goes*). It will fill someone's mouth anyway.

(JUDAS *takes it up and goes.*)

(*A great shout heard. People come on and stand at the roadside.* ST. BRIGIT *with them and* JOEL.)

1ST WOMAN. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

2ND WOMAN. Blessed be the Kingdom of our Father David!

JOEL. Blessed is the King of Israel!

(*The* WOMEN *strew more branches.*)

1ST WOMAN (*sings*)

O blossomed branch and O apple flower!
O sun in harvest, O blessed face!
O golden spear in the hand of power!
O harp that sounds in the Court of Grace!
Lift up the gates of the golden city,
Welcome the King of Glory in!
Mind without malice, heart of pity.
Lord that will master death and sin!

(CHRIST *appears. He is followed by* ST. JOHN *and a crowd. The* WOMEN *stand aside.*)

1ST WOMAN. May God enable you!

3RD WOMAN. All the luck in the world to you!

1ST WOMAN. The blessing of the Sun and Moon upon you!

JOEL. Surely his equal never walked on land or grass!

2ND WOMAN. God bless every hair of his head!

ST. BRIGIT. Why would we not shout for him that is more than any earthly King!

MARCUS (*to* SILAS). He has a great gathering of people sure enough.

SILAS. That I may live to see a bigger crowd gathered to see him made an end of!

MARCUS. No doubt but he has got them in his hand.

(*The women and others kneel before* CHRIST. *He lifts his hand in blessing. Others press round Him.*)

SILAS. What are they but fools that do not stand up and question him. Here now is a Scribe of our Court (*he takes the arm of a young man he has been whispering with*) who will stand up to him and will be well able to entangle him in his talk!

(SILAS *pushes forward the young man.*)

YOUNG SCRIBE (*going up to* CHRIST *confidently*). Tell me now, which is the first commandment of all?

CHRIST. The first of all the commandments is this: "The Lord

our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." There is none other commandment greater than these.

YOUNG SCRIBE (*as if abashed, and moving back a step*). Well, Master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God and none other but He. And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifies.

CHRIST (*raising his hand to bless him*). Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God. (*The young man goes and kneels among his followers.*)

MARCUS (*to* SILAS). You had best leave him alone unless you can do better yourself.

SILAS. So I will do better. I'll question him—or anyway that follower of his that is his nearest friend. (*Goes to* ST. JOHN.) Tell me now why is it that Master of yours that is preaching against evil doers sits down to eat with publicans and sinners?

CHRIST (*turning to look at him*). They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go and learn what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (SILAS *turns away muttering, but at a laugh from* MARCUS *turns back again angrily.*)

SILAS. Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, not washing their hands?

CHRIST. Why do ye also transgress the counsel of God by your tradition? Ye hypocrites! Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, "This people draweth nigh to me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me!" Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye bind heavy burdens and heavy to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders, but ye yourselves will not lift them with one of your fingers. (SILAS *slinks away.* CHRIST *goes on toward the Gate, and stops for a moment outside it.*) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee! How often would I have gathered thee to me as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not.

If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. Behold your house is left unto you desolate! (*He goes in through the Gate.* SILAS *takes up a stone to fling at him, but* BRIGIT *stops him.*)

ST. BRIGIT. This is surely a man from beyond the world.

ST. JOHN. He is the Christ of God.

SILAS. He is no better than a blasphemer, breaking through the commands of the law!

ST. JOHN. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (*Goes on.*)

JOEL. He is surely the man that will deliver Israel. He is well fitted to be our King. He teaches with authority and not as do the Scribes.

(*They all follow him through the Gate, except* MARCUS *and* SILAS.)

SILAS. He must be put down. If we let him alone there is not a man but will believe in him. You must give a hand to it. Where you made your mind up to take and to keep this country ye must take the burden of governing it.

MARCUS. You have your own Courts and your Judges.

SILAS. There is no satisfaction in that. He must be put down by Roman Law.

MARCUS. You are making little of your own laws. I see no sense in that.

SILAS. There is sense and good sense in it and good reason.

MARCUS. Running down the Court of your own High Priest! You should be satisfied with that.

SILAS. I cannot be satisfied.

MARCUS. It can judge and give sentence.

SILAS. There is one thing it cannot give.

MARCUS. What thing is that?

SILAS. The penalty of death.

MARCUS. He has done nothing worthy of death.

SILAS. If we show you that he has, will you come to our aid?

MARCUS. Well, I'm not saying but we might.

SILAS. I'll hold you to that word.

MARCUS. There's no hurry. You know well you cannot bring him before us while the city is given over to your Feast. There would be an uproar of the people. Wait till he'll do something out of the way.

SILAS. He cannot be left at large misleading them as he is. He must be taken before the Feast will begin.

MARCUS. It's best wait a while. Pilate himself will be glad to get a little reprieve on the Feast days, and not to be attending his Court.

SILAS. There can be no delay. We must take him by craft. If we can but get someone to spy on him and get him in a snare when he is away from the throng. And here is the very one coming back I had in my mind——

MARCUS. That surly fellow who was carrying the bag?

SILAS. I was trying my hand on him yesterday. He is coveting a plot of land that has a price on it of thirty pieces of silver. I nearly had him gained, but he turned around in the finish and left me there! That's the trouble in this country! Anyone that has the name of a disturber or a rebel is as safe among them as your Cæsar on his golden throne. There is no one will harm the smallest rib of his hair.

MARCUS. Well, that is your own business.

SILAS. Just leave me with him for two minutes of time. I could maybe come around him saying it will be best for his Master's own safety to keep him gaoled for a while, and out of reach of those fierce sects that will be coming through these days from the North.

MARCUS. That'll do. I'll go on to the head of the road.

SILAS. I'll be able to do with a little coaxing and humouring.

(MARCUS *goes as* JUDAS *comes on from the Gate, walking quickly.*)

SILAS (*catching hold of his arm*). Stop a minute!

JUDAS. Let go my arm!

SILAS. What a hurry you are in. Are you forgetting what we were talking about yesterday—the price of that little field outside the walls.

JUDAS (*shaking himself free and looking at him*). Was it *you* betrayed me?

SILAS. What are you saying?

JUDAS. If it was I give you my word you'll be sorry for it.

SILAS. There was nothing to betray.

JUDAS. What was it made my comrades put me out of their company? Giving hard looks at me—turning me back this very minute from the Temple gate. What way could they know I had lent an ear to you, and you asking me to whisper one little word as to where our Master would be in the night time?

SILAS. If I did I made a good offer with it. A nice thing a little garden of land to have and to own. Money may be spent or be stolen, but the land cannot run away——

JUDAS (*with a harsh laugh*). You are wasting all that talk! I'll take your silver and your job! There is a devil come into me since yesterday, and little I care where he'll lead me. If they turn their back on me I'll make them repent it! If they reproach me with being a thief I'll be worse again than a thief! That's it. Give me money in my hand! If I liked it well up to this it will be my darling from this out, and my weapon. I'll make them know I can bring down the whole of them in giving up their Master!

SILAS. That's right. I was nearly in dread you had not that much courage.

JUDAS. I have courage! And I will face him, and will go up to him, and salute him, and betray him into your hand!

(*Shouting is heard inside the Gate.*)

SILAS. Here is the money. Thirty pieces of silver. (*He gives it in a heavy leather purse.*)

JUDAS. Give it here to me! (*Turns to go.*) And I thought ere yesterday I never would go against him, but would be his well-wisher to the world's end! (*He goes off as* MARCUS *returns.*)

DANIEL (*running out from the Gate, money clutched in his hand*). That's the way to serve them!

SILAS. What has happened?

JOEL (*coming after him*). It is begun and well begun!

SILAS. Speak plain, can't you!

JOEL. Those big men and those sons of pride in the Temple that are content to be under the foreigners and have struck no blow for freedom, he has brought down their pride!

SILAS. What are you talking about?

JOEL. He gave them a great overthrow! That's how we'll see the Romans running before him in the same way!

DANIEL. He made great havoc among them! Look at what I gathered on the ground—a full handful of copper and of silver—my grief that it is not gold! You never saw such a welter as was in it!

JOEL. The day is not far off when the strangers will be stretched without anyone to cry after them! And we ourselves lighting a bonfire that will reach as high as the stars of heaven! (*Runs on.*)

SILAS (*to* DANIEL). Where now did you steal that much?

DANIEL. Would you call it stealing to pick up what was thrown down upon the floor? Would you wish golden coins to run into mouseholes, or down the steps into the street?

SILAS (*seizing him*). What are you raving about?

DANIEL. Up the Nazarene! He was ever and always for the poor

against the rich! Hadn't I the luck that I followed him inside the gate and as far as the Temple?

SILAS. The Temple!

DANIEL. In with him, and he had the traders cleared out of the place on the minute, before the crack of his whip!

SILAS. He never dared do that much!

DANIEL. That's my darling! Cattle-dealers, money-lenders, merchants and moneyed people, the whole fleet of them, and he driving them before him with his scourge! Bullocks having flesh piled up on them! Heifers and horned cattle running to and fro! Tables falling, stalls broken; gold and silver rolling there and hither! My grief I had not a bit of wax spread upon the sole of my shoe before I was driven out the door by the weight of the crowd.

SILAS. What ailed him to go meddle with the stalls that are owned by Caiaphas? He will go stark mad.

DANIEL. I wouldn't miss for seven years of life the fun I had viewing the bankers, fat and frightened as they were, making their escape with their lives! And the pigeons that are reared by Annas flying in their circles above in the high air, and his profits going with them into the clouds! You couldn't but laugh seeing that. Wait till I'll go shout it down the road!

SILAS. Get out of that! (*Pushes him. He stumbles, and his handful of money is scattered.*)

DANIEL. O you have my handful of silver scattered! Wait till I'll gather it up!

SILAS (*pushing him on*). Get out of this. Look now, go before me to the Chief Priest's house, and I'll put you in the way of a job will bring the double of that into your hand.

DANIEL. I'd sooner have my own. My grief I didn't spend it and enjoy it in the commencement! (*Goes.*)

SILAS (*to* MARCUS). Now will you believe me telling you this Nazarene is a danger?

MARCUS. Indeed he would seem to be a very turbulent fellow.

SILAS. Will you give him leave to go stir up the whole country, making his attack on the wealthy and the well-to-do?

MARCUS. He had best be silenced for a while. Pilate would not give a clipping of his nail for that thing you call "religion." But to turn around upon property, that is a thing that might spread.

SILAS. Maybe *now* you will let your soldiers lend a hand to put him down?

MARCUS. But when will you get a hold of him? The Head Government would sooner not meddle with him in the daytime.

SILAS. Never fear. He will be gaoled before morning. We will take him this very night!

Curtain.

ACT II

SCENE. *An open place in the City. In the centre the steps of* PILATE'S *Palace. A street goes right and left. It is early morning. There are lighted lamps by the Palace door.* 1ST WOMAN *is sitting on the steps.*

1ST WOMAN (*sings*)

There in the night, his comrades leaving,
No shadow near him but his own,
The winds around him keening, grieving,
He fought his battle out alone.

A traitor's kiss the traitor's token;
My grief that such a thing could be!
The strings of every harp are broken,
The leaves are withered on every tree.

My bitter shame, my lasting sorrow,
The crowds that sent his name so high
Failed and forsook him on the morrow,
And he must go alone to die!

(*She gets up and goes out to the left, singing lower to herself. The two other women come in from the right, one hurrying after the other.*)

2ND WOMAN. Is it true what they are saying that he is taken?

3RD WOMAN. That is what they were telling me down the road. My heart started with trouble hearing that.

2ND WOMAN. It must surely be a lie. It is impossible his enemies would dare it, and all the whole country shouting for him yesterday.

3RD WOMAN. That is the very thing put anger on them. It would

wound your heart to think anyone would lay a hand on him, and he the best man that ever walked the road.

2ND WOMAN. Och! This is a heavy day surely, and the darkest May morning that ever came upon the world!

(ST. BRIGIT *comes on.* 1ST WOMAN *comes from the other side.*)

3RD WOMAN. Here is that Saint of the Gael coming, that some call the fostermother of Christ. She might have some tidings. (*To* ST. BRIGIT) Where were you through the night time?

ST. BRIGIT. I was with the Mother of our Lord.

1ST WOMAN. And what way is she? This trouble must lie very heavy on her.

ST. BRIGIT. It is as if it was foreshowed to her from the beginning. It is a long time there has been a shadow across her heart.

(*The dawn begins to break.* JOEL *comes on, looking downcast.*)

2ND WOMAN. It is hard to know what is happening. There is no stir yet on this side of Pilate's house.

JOEL. It is on the other side the stir is, where Annas the High Priest has his Court.

2ND WOMAN. Annas! And for what reason is that old man holding his Court in the night time?

JOEL. For a bad reason, and a very bad cause.

3RD WOMAN. Is it true that they have taken our Master?

JOEL. They have taken him indeed, and by treachery.

1ST WOMAN. By treachery. That story is the breaking of my heart to me. And indeed I never heard the like in all my years gone by.

2ND WOMAN. It is a pity for anyone that was against him. There is not a better man to help the poor on this side of the world. Not on this side of the world.

3RD WOMAN. Who is there that could show him illwill? A man without blemish. There was no friend or no stranger he would refuse. Look at the Woman of Samaria, how she brought the whole district to believe on him.

JOEL. It was no stranger did it.

2ND WOMAN. Some very bitter enemy it should be, having a black, cruel heart.

JOEL. Ah, leave talking. It was one of the twelve were nearest him. One of his comrades and his friends.

2ND WOMAN. Which of them was it, I wonder. It cannot have been John—or Peter.

JOEL. I will not blacken my mouth with that name that will be under a curse for ever!

(*The dawn brightens.*)

1ST WOMAN. He should be a long time before Annas.

JOEL. No, but they brought him to Caiaphas with the crowing of the cock—That there may be a curse upon this day for ever!

ST. BRIGIT. But he is not judged yet, or condemned.

JOEL. He is as good as judged. They are all his sworn enemies, Scribes and Pharisees, priests and people of note. The best of them is as thorny as a briar.

3RD WOMAN. They will need some excuse against him.

JOEL. What excuse does the wolf make when he grips the lamb by the throat?

2ND WOMAN. He is white and innocent as a lamb.

ST. BRIGIT. He is the Lamb of God.

JOEL. It is a lion he would be if he had but time to raise the country. He had but to call to us that knew him to be the man we were promised through the ages, "To stand for an ensign of the people; to assemble the outcasts of Israel; to gather together the dispersed of Judah." He had but to give us the wind of the word! We would have put fire to every Roman house if he had made but a sign with his hand!

1ST WOMAN. It is likely he was our Redeemer indeed that was foretold, that would make the lame to leap like a deer and the blind to see.

JOEL. He had but to make his call, "Awake, awake! Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem! Shake thyself from the dust, loose the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion!" Oh, if I could see her free, and the Roman eagles gone, I think I would be content to lose my soul!

2ND WOMAN. Maybe he had not the chance, and he brought away in the darkness. A great pity there was no friend within call.

JOEL. I myself was not far from him at that time, when he was taken and after he was taken.

3RD WOMAN. Oh, were you there! And what way at all did it come about?

JOEL. I went after him, thinking to get some word or some sign to bring back to the mountains. But when I reached to the olive trees of the garden he was lost to me in the shadows, and I could hear no word. And then I saw his friends.

ST. BRIGIT. The Twelve?

JOEL. Themselves—or the most of them. But I was no wiser than

before, and I might as well have been deaf and blind, for there had fallen upon them a passion of sleep.

ST. BRIGIT. Oh! How could they sleep and he in danger!

2ND WOMAN. It is likely they did not know of that. And they should be tired and worn out following him as they did on the road through the whole length of the day.

ST. BRIGIT. And was our Lord himself asleep?

JOEL. Tired and all as he was, I think he had never closed an eye. When I went farther I could hear his voice as if praying for a while. It would seem as if there was some hard thing before him.

ST. BRIGIT. It was surely made known to him what was about to take place.

JOEL. The last word I heard him say was "Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt!"

ST. BRIGIT. It was to his Father indeed he was calling. For if he calls himself the Son of Man it is certain he is the Son of the living God.

JOEL. I heard then the soldiers coming, and the Chief Priest's men. And I was in dread they would find me there, and I slipped away and rambled the streets for a while. And then I saw lights in a big house, and some stir, and people moving about at the door. I asked no question, but I heard them saying it was Jesus of Nazarene had been brought to be judged. And I slipped in unknownst among the crowd.

2ND WOMAN. Did you do that? And what way was he?

JOEL. Someway tired he looked, with weakness and the want of sleep. Annas was saying it was known he kept company with rebels and with lawbreakers, and was trying to pick out of him the names of his followers and of his friends.

3RD WOMAN. He would never give them up.

JOEL. You may say that indeed. He is the good tree that never would let fall any branch. With all the power Annas has, and his threats, it failed him to get one word out of his mouth.

1ST WOMAN. He never preached hurt or harm to anyone.

JOEL. If he did not itself they would likely put a twist on his words. If they are looking for the truth, it is for a truth would suit themselves. Annas had that thought in his mind asking him what he had taught. But he gave a right answer—he spoke very stiff. Not to ask him what he had taught, but to ask them that had heard him.

3RD WOMAN. That was very fair and very good.

JOEL. One of the soldiers said that was no answer to give the High Priest, and hit him a blow in the face.

ST. BRIGIT. Oh! Did they strike him indeed!

JOEL. They did so. And with that Annas sent him on to the Court of Caiaphas.

3RD WOMAN. He is great with Caiaphas that is joined and wedded with his daughter. I'm in dread he will find no better treatment there.

JOEL. And what happened after I don't know, for the soldiers would let no one go into that Court without them having leave.

1ST WOMAN. A great wonder he did not call down fire from Heaven to destroy the whole of them.

ST. BRIGIT. What he is come for is not to destroy the world, but that the world through him should be saved.

2ND WOMAN. Oh, they will send him to his death! Is there no door of hope?

(DANIEL *comes on.*)

JOEL (*standing up*). What at all are we doing here, prating and chattering, and the man that came to save us being like a bird in the fowler's net!

DANIEL. And what are you thinking to do?

JOEL. To do in this very hour what was foretold to us through the years past. To rise up and throw out the Romans and their friends that are about to send him to the slaughter! (*He cries out, as* SILAS *comes in and stands behind a pillar*) Who will come to the help of the Country and of the Nazarene?

(*A crowd gathers from both sides.*)

DANIEL. Well, I'll give my help to whoever will give me the price of a drop to keep up my courage!

JOEL. Let alone talking of prices or profit! (*Goes up a step.*) The man, Jesus of Nazareth that is come to be our leader and will be our King——

CROWD. So he will! He is well worthy!

1ST MAN. He has the prayers of the poor of the world!

JOEL. He is brought to prison! His enemies are judging him. They are putting insults on him! I saw a soldier hitting him a clout on the face——

(*A murmur of anger from the crowd.*)

1ST MAN. We'll drag him out of their hands!

2ND MAN. We'll pull down the Court!

3RD MAN. Town and country will come to his aid!

(SILAS, *who has been whispering with* DANIEL, *and has put something in his hand, comes in front of the pillar.*)

JOEL. Once we get him out of their hands he will be safe!

1ST MAN. Not a door but will be open to him!

2ND MAN. Their best won't find him!

1ST MAN. Come on now till we'll save him!

JOEL. We'll fall on the guard as they are bringing him out of the Court, till he will slip away through us!

1ST MAN. Everyone of us will do away with one of the soldiers!

2ND MAN. We'll banish them!

3RD MAN. The curse of the weak on them!

1ST MAN. And the curse of the strong!

JOEL. We'll put fire to their barracks that are empty! They'll find nothing but ashes when they'll go look for their catapults and their swords!

CROWD. Come on! Come on! Away with Cæsar! We'll have a King of our own.

SILAS (*coming forward*). Hearken now to me. What everyone of you will have is a rope around your neck, and a death by stoning or by the sword.

JOEL (*turning to him*). Even so! If we are killed itself, to die for our country is a good death to die!

SILAS. If it is death you are craving you'll get it, and go fatten the foxes in the fields!

JOEL. We're not so easy put down! We'll give Rome her wages for the bones she has left bleaching through the world!

SILAS. And what have ye in your hands to go battle with Rome that has conquered Gaul and the most of the countries of the known world? Maybe a stump of a stick you might go cut in the garden above!

JOEL. Every gap will be made easy to us! God is stronger than the Romans!

SILAS (*to the crowd, holding up tablets*). What have *ye* to say? I am writing on my tablets the name of such of you as are ready to follow this mountainy lad that never walked the streets of a town till yesterday! Is it along with him ye are going like conies into a snare or a trap?

1ST MAN. Maybe the right time didn't come yet.

JOEL. Do not renage now! Come on and put them to the rout!

2ND MAN. Sure enough we might find ourselves taken and tormented in a gaol.

3RD MAN. I've no mind to put myself in a sharp-toothed trap.

1ST MAN. In my opinion we can serve the country better living than dead.

JOEL. What did the prophets say? "Turn ye to the stronghold ye prisoners of hope! For now I will break the yoke from off thee and will break thy bonds in sunder." That saying must come true!

2ND MAN. The time didn't come yet. We'll wait for another chance. (*Goes.*)

JOEL. Are you all forsaking him?

3RD MAN. I wouldn't wish to go against the neighbours. (*Goes.*)

JOEL. Oh! If I was up on the hillsides, I wouldn't be without help this day! (*All have gone but* SILAS.)

SILAS. You were I suppose a close friend of the Nazarene?

JOEL. I never saw him till yesterday, but I know him to be the man is come to save us.

SILAS. You thought him to be like yourself—a red enemy to the Romans?

JOEL. There is no good man but is that.

SILAS. To be sure, to be sure. I am saying nothing against it. Wouldn't we all be well pleased having the country in our own hands?

JOEL. I see yourself very thick with the foreigners.

SILAS. Getting what I can by civility. I do more for the country that way than you rebels by showing your ill-will.

JOEL. It was by your help our leader was taken.

SILAS. Your leader is he? Well, there are as great fools to-day as ever there were in the world.

JOEL. In or out of prison my heart is with the man that is being tried for his life.

SILAS. And you thought him to be for upsetting the Government? Well, let me tell you he was deceiving you.

JOEL. No one but a fool or a woman would say such a thing as that!

SILAS. No one but a cracked mountainy youngster would be ignorant that he bade the people pay tribute to Cæsar. All the world knows that. And more again, there is a story going that he did miracles, bringing the money for tribute up from the depths of the sea sooner than let the Government be at the loss of it.

JOEL. There must be some answer to that.

SILAS (*interrupting*). Blind as you are can't you see that when he thought himself strong enough to make an attack, what he attacked was not the palace of Pilate or his Court. No, but the Temple of the Jews, our own Temple and the glory of our nation.

Threaten he did to knock the whole of it within three days. Could he do that without the foreign soldiers' help? To knock down our laws along with it, and our customs. What had he in mind doing that but to put Judea entirely into the hand of Rome, the same as a bird's nest?

JOEL (*passionately*). I would as soon believe the sun to be failing in the sky!

(*He goes away sorrowfully, as* MARCUS *comes out from the door.*)

MARCUS. Well, Silas, I was looking for you in the Court of Caiaphas, and the trial of the Nazarene going on.

SILAS. I have my own work to do among the people. There was danger they would make some attempt to rescue him. But it's likely now that unless an odd woman or a cripple there is no one will put out any cry for him at all. What way is the trial going? What happened with Caiaphas?

MARCUS (*with a laugh*). What you might know would happen! With all your bragging of your Jewish law it would seem not to be able to deal with one poor prophet of the roads, but to send him from Caiaphas to the Court of Pilate to settle the case! Rousing him from his sleep and his slumber to put on his judgment robes, and go question the prisoner, that they brought in by the side door, unknown to the people of the city. I wonder he brought his life so far, for if your old Annas is cranky and crabbed enough, I give you my word the son-in-law is worse again.

SILAS. That is not the way to be speaking of the High Priests.

MARCUS. All the talk you had of your laws, from Moses down, and the danger of a man doing cures by the roadside, and that he would pull down the whole Empire, and that all we had to do was to get a hold of him and bring him before your judges!

SILAS. And what complaint have you to make of being asked to do that much?

MARCUS. That much! Dragging our soldiers out on a job that is no profit to us, and will bring us into discredit with the people! And when we have done all that, and delivered him into your Court that is swarming with Scribes and lawyers—what happens?

SILAS. To question him I suppose they did; and to bring witnesses.

MARCUS. That's it! Witnesses! Isn't that the first thing if a man is to be found guilty, to have the witnesses ready against him?

SILAS. So they had them ready. They were gathering them this week past.

MARCUS. Then they are bad harvesters. It's the Judges in Rome that would laugh their fill if they could be here to-day! Witnesses! A whole fleet of them, paid and unpaid, coming in pairs and in threes and alone, to work malice on him. And whatever way they came it was easy seen after a few questions that there was no two or no three of them that could agree together.

SILAS. I had a right to have been there myself. Bad management.

MARCUS. They brought in two together at the last, that said the prisoner had given out in their hearing he would pull down the Temple stone by stone. Is that sort of talk enough to call together the High Court in the night time?

SILAS. He said it sure enough.

MARCUS. A pity you were not there to swear to that, for the two that told it could not agree upon the words. After that, Caiaphas took in hand himself to catechize the Nazarene.

SILAS. It was time for him. Why couldn't he do it at the first.

MARCUS. Little he got by it. No answer at all, until at the last the question was put in the name of the living God.

SILAS. He answered that?

MARCUS. It was put to him straight and fair—"Are you the Son of God?" He said to that, "If I tell you ye will not believe"; and then, "ye say that I am." And he said the Son of Man would sit in the hereafter on the right hand of the power of God. And whether he meant himself, or some one of the everliving Gods, I cannot tell.

SILAS. That was rank blasphemy. There is no need of other witnesses. That is worthy of death.

MARCUS. So they are saying in the Court, the whole of them. It was the first thing they could catch a hold of. And as to Caiaphas, he made the most of it, showing off as if on a stage, tearing his clothes as if raging mad. He has a bitter and a hasty nature sure enough.

SILAS. It is no wonder he should be in a passion.

MARCUS. As to the rest of them, soldiers and lookers on, they began to spit at the prisoner, and to strike at him, and buffet him, and to cover his eyes, and say, "Prophesy now which of us hit that stroke?" The whole of the assembly ran wild with spite and malice, that nearly seemed to come from some sort of fear or fright.

SILAS. Our Judges are not so easy frightened, whatever fear there might be on that author of mischief, the Nazarene, finding himself in their hand.

MARCUS. He was indeed like a bird of the high air cast down

among wild cats of the clefts. They lost no time making their attack on him.

SILAS. That's right. Give him cruelty till you'll put sense in him. That's the way to tame him and to bring him down.

MARCUS. I don't know. I give you my word you would wonder at him, facing the whole of them as he did, without fear or flinching, without any frown on his face, but as if he was not in the one world with them at all.

SILAS. It seems like as if he had put some spell upon yourself, or some craziness.

MARCUS. To look at him, and to see his courage, and never a friend to help, you would nearly say him to be the only man in the place you would call a man, whether he is or is not of the gods.

SILAS. It will be a poor story if Pilate your master leans to his side as you yourself are seeming to do.

MARCUS. Pilate won't take that much notice of him. He is easy-minded. He will maybe give him up to the priests that are calling for his death, to humour them, even if he finds no cause against him. And if he does that, it will not be for the sake of the Roman Empire, but that you are welcome to do away with as many of your own nation as is pleasing to you.

SILAS. So it will please the people and satisfy them.

MARCUS. I saw no sign of that yesterday, when the whole full of the road was shouting for him.

SILAS. You may believe me telling you they will have another shout and another story to-day.

MARCUS. So they might. This shouting of crowds is but the cackling of ganders and their flock, or the howling of wild dogs after their prey. And I wouldn't wonder at all if Pilate gets vexed with them making their clamour around his house, after spoiling his sleep on him, and will let off the Nazarene in the finish, that gave him no annoyance at all.

(*He goes as* JOEL *comes back and is walking across gloomily.*)

SILAS. Come hither now! Did you hear that your leader that is going to rise against Rome is after being brought before Pilate?

JOEL. That is you own doing, and your own fault. Recognizing the foreign Courts.

SILAS. You'll see now is he in with the foreign Government! Like master, like man, and Pilate's trusted man was here on the minute, and if you heard him putting a good name on the Nazarene, and saying he was the best man in the Court, you would maybe believe he had some settlement made with them.

JOEL. That he had betrayed the country? I would never believe that.

SILAS. Wait a while and maybe you'll see Pilate is on his side, and will make excuses for him.

JOEL. If Pilate does that and had any treaty with him, I will never believe again in anyone at all, man, priest or God, in or out of the world.

(*He goes off.* SILAS *goes over to meet* DANIEL, *who comes on.*)

SILAS. Did you do the work I bade you?

DANIEL (*drunkenly*). I did. I went into the drinking houses, and gave a glass—and the promise of another—to every man that would come into the Square and call out against the Nazarene.

SILAS. Very good. His own followers are affrighted and scattered here and there. That will do. (*Is going.*)

DANIEL. I have all the money spent. I am wanting more.

SILAS. You'll not get it till this day's work is done, or you'll be lying in a ditch, and no use to anyone.

DANIEL. I am use! And great use! If you have the people threatened, I have them coaxed!

SILAS (*giving him some money*). Go on then—put hurry on you. Make no delay. There is some stir in the Governor's house. It is likely the trial is at an end. (*Pushes him off, and goes in at door.*)

DANIEL (*shouting*). Come on, lads! Let ye shout against the Nazarene till your throat is dry. (*Crowd begins to gather.*) And believe me you won't be drouthy to-night! Come on, now! Come on, here! Down with the Nazarene! Up Pilate!

SILAS (*coming from the door*). Bid them to call for Pilate to come out the door! Let him see they are against the prisoner! (*The* WOMEN *come on.*)

DANIEL. Let ye shout now! Make a call for Pilate!

1ST MAN. What is it we want with him?

DANIEL. Little I care! Let him come out till we'll get a view of him. Pilate! Pilate!

CROWD. Pilate! Pilate! Come out and speak to us! Pilate!

SILAS. Take care is he shielding the Nazerene that is your enemy!

1ST WOMAN. He is no enemy but our friend!

SILAS (*pushing her away*). Raising riots he is! Pulling down the country!

3RD WOMAN. He is worthy to be our King!

SILAS (*to the crowd*). Be said and led by those that have knowledge and that you know. He is bringing trouble on you. He will

wreck and destroy the city along with the Temple. He will bring the soldiers on you!

(*Groans from the crowd.*)

SILAS. No peace and comfort in your lives! Starvation in place of plenty! Rid yourselves of him or the whole of ye will be driven in chains (*groans*). Let this man die, and save the whole nation. Tell out that now to Pilate!

CROWD. Pilate! Pilate! Come out, Pilate!

PILATE (*coming out on the steps, holds up his hand for silence*). What is this uproar?

CROWD. Down with the Nazerene!

PILATE (*holding up his hand again*). Be silent! (*The crowd obeys.*) This man was brought to me as one that is perverting the nation, and leading the people astray.

CROWD. That's right! So he is leading us astray!

PILATE. A ringleader, a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition —forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar——

CROWD. So he is against Cæsar!

PILATE. That is what was laid down. But it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before that he which is accused have the accuser face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

SILAS. So they did face him! The witnesses laid their clear case before Caiaphas!

CROWD. That's it! That's it! Their clear case!

PILATE. Their witness did not agree, and therefore it did not stand.

SILAS. If he was not a malefactor we would not have sent him to you!

CROWD. That's the chat!

PILATE. They had certain questions against him of their own superstition. But I, as a Roman Governor, have nothing against him.

1ST MAN. He is giving us no clear answer!

SILAS. Never fear he will give in to us when he'll see we will not give in to him. (*To* PILATE) Is it nothing to you that he gave himself out to be a King?

PILATE. I questioned him as to that. His answer was, "My Kingdom is not of this world."

1ST WOMAN. That is so. He is the King of Heaven.

PILATE. My jurisdiction does not go outside this world and this Empire of Rome. I asked him again, "Art thou a King?" and he

said, "To that end was I born, and to this end came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth."

1ST WOMAN. That is so. He came to bear witness to the truth.

PILATE. What is truth? (*He turns to go.*)

1ST MAN. Will you let him make his escape!

2ND MAN. Little he cares for ourselves!

3RD MAN. Or for our Priests! Up Caiaphas!

PILATE (*turning back*). Am I a Jew? It is best for me to send him back to your own judgment seat, and let you judge him by your own laws.

SILAS. It is for his death we make our call. You know well it is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

CROWD. He is deserving of death!

PILATE. Have your own way, then. I will not refuse the Chief Priests and the people. I am willing to do what is pleasing to them. I will go back and give judgment against him.

CROWD. That's right! (*They cheer.*)

1ST MAN. Come back, let ye, to the door of the Court!

2ND MAN. Hurry on till we'll see him condemned! (*They all run off.*)

(PILATE *turns to go.* MARCUS *meets him inside the doorway.*)

MARCUS. Here is the Egyptian Nurse with a message. (*He goes back.*)

EGYPTIAN (*pushing past him*). Pilate, Pilate, your wife is calling for you.

PILATE. Tell her I cannot come. I am going to the Hall of Judgment.

EGYPTIAN. She bade me give you a message.

PILATE. It must wait.

EGYPTIAN. It is not an idle matter makes her call to you.

PILATE. My own business is not idle, a matter of a man's life.

EGYPTIAN. Her business also is concerned with life and death.

PILATE. I have but to give sentence. There will be little delay in that.

EGYPTIAN (*seizing his arm*). Hearken Pilate. She had a vision of the night.

PILATE. What has that to do with life or death?

EGYPTIAN. She cried out in her sleep—a sharp cry that wakened me. I asked her what ailed her. She was pale and trembling. She called for you, "Pilate, come!" and then, "Where is he? Where is my husband? There is some great danger before him."

PILATE. A foolish dream. What way could I be in danger in my own Judgment Hall?

EGYPTIAN. She was as if shivering. She held my hands. She said, "Shadow-shapes gathered around me calling out a warning—a warning against the shedding of innocent blood." She asked me then were you sleeping yet, and if you had any heavy business before you. I told her they had wakened you at the parting of night and day to go judge some disturber, some lawbreaker that was accused by the Jews. She cried out again——

PILATE. That could lead me into no danger. It is but a wandering Nazarene that has given offence to some of these Jewish bigots. That is folly.

EGYPTIAN. You would think it no folly if you had seen the way she was, as if remembering some dreadful thing. "I see it—I see it, as it was in the dream," she said. "I saw him sending a just man to his death. I saw blood—dropping, dropping—I saw as if in a mirror Pilate sent back to Italy—to Rome."

PILATE. To Italy! That is good. Oh that I could be there at this time! That I could see the gardens by the Tiber, and feel the peace that is in the heart of Rome! To be rid of these ugly scolding priests, and their God that sends but his harsh threatenings and has no human form!

EGYPTIAN. In Rome she saw you, and beyond Rome, and sent on again—on again—without rest. And all the time she saw you trying to wipe away some blood that was on your hands. And you were as if in disgrace, and she could not reach to you.

PILATE. And then—what did she see?

EGYPTIAN. Far away, westward—in the country of the Gauls—she saw you. (*She covers her eyes with her hand.*)

PILATE. What did she see?

EGYPTIAN. She saw you in the single shirt of linen that was your shroud. She saw blood again upon your hands——. And this time it was your own life blood. And it was by yourself it was shed.

PILATE (*in a whisper*). That was the end?

EGYPTIAN. She rose up then, and she called out, as if she was but just on the moment awake: "Tell him to have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things in my dream because of him!"

(*She goes back into the Palace.* PILATE *leans for a moment against the door. The people come running back.*)

1ST MAN. There is Pilate. He never went to the Court at all.

2ND MAN. He was but mocking us!

3RD MAN. Making little of us! Ridiculing us!

CROWD. Hurry on with the judgment! No delay!

SILAS. That is not the way to treat our nation!

PILATE (*coming forward slowly*). I would need more evidence that he has broken the law before I would condemn him.

SILAS. He stirred up the people, urging them to destruction!

DANIEL. Through the whole country!

1ST MAN. Through every district—beginning from Galilee!

PILATE. From Galilee! Is he a Galilean?

1ST MAN. He is that!

2ND MAN. So he is! A Galilean!

PILATE. Then I am free of him! He belongs to Herod's jurisdiction, not mine. I will send him to Herod's Court! (*He goes back into the Palace.*)

1ST MAN. Come and see him with Herod!

2ND MAN. Come on to Herod's Court!

3RD MAN. He will get no mercy there! (*They all go off, except the* WOMEN *and* DANIEL.)

1ST WOMAN. From one Judge to another, and every one worse than another.

3RD WOMAN. He will find no escape. Herod that struck the head off John the Baptist will not spare him that is a greater prophet again.

JUDAS (*coming in has heard the last words*). What are you saying? Is it that he is sent to Herod?

1ST WOMAN. You are one of his followers. It is often I took notice of you in his company. To know of his life being in danger must put a great weight upon your heart.

JUDAS. They will but banish him. Or maybe gaol him for a while.

1ST WOMAN. It is his death his enemies are calling for. A bad crowd against him, and a careless Pilate. They are very bitter. It will be hard for him to make his escape.

3RD WOMAN. Twelve friends that we thought would die for him, and one of them betrayed him.

2ND WOMAN. There could hardly be a greater treachery than that. To betray his Master!

1ST WOMAN. If ever it is known who it is, there will be a cruel end before him.

JUDAS (*going on*). Why wouldn't he get the better of them if he has power from Heaven? Wouldn't he be able to throw a mist of darkness around him, and to slip away?

3RD WOMAN. He will never make his escape that way. You might

remember him saying, "He that findeth his life will lose it, but he that loses it will find it."

JUDAS. Or to call down fire from Heaven.

2ND WOMAN. It is on whoever betrayed him that should fall.

(JUDAS *goes on.*)

DANIEL (*still rather drunken, catching hold of him as he passes*). You did that night work well surely. I am a good man myself to do a job of the sort, but you are a better.

JUDAS. Leave go of me!

DANIEL. To bring the soldiers up so nice and so quiet through the darkness, where there was no one to call out, or to make any disturbance at all.

JUDAS. Let me go, I say! (*The* WOMEN *have gathered around them.*)

DANIEL. Sure you need not mind me knowing it. Don't be so stiff now. I earn my money fair and honest calling Hi! for one, and Down with another, according as I am paid. Why wouldn't I earn my little supper shouting with my voice as good as labouring with my hands? Do not be so unfriendly now. Aren't we on the one side? The two of us are covetous for money. You are a big man, and I am a small man that drank away my means, and must go forage along the roads. And I don't begrudge you your reward. If all I got out of it is these coppers, and they gave you silver on this job, there's not the black of my nail between us. For if I have the corner boys all bought, you have your Master sold!

3RD WOMAN. Oh, isn't he the terrible type of a ruffian?

1ST WOMAN. The worst man you could think of wouldn't do a thing like that!

(*They all shrink from him.* ST. JOHN *and* ST. BRIGIT *come in.*)

ST. JOHN. Judas, is *that* your Master? (*He goes on.* DANIEL *slinks away.*)

2ND WOMAN. It is best for you hide your head for ever. To take money for betraying him! That is the worst of all.

JUDAS (*holding out the purse*). I wish to God you would take the money, and know how little I covet it! I bestow it to you as a free gift!

2ND WOMAN. Do you think I would touch it with my hand! It is a crooked and a very crooked way you got it!

JUDAS (*to* 1ST WOMAN). Can't you bring it away, and divide it on the poor.

1ST WOMAN. There is no beggar going the road would touch it, or no leper, knowing it to be the price of blood!

ST. BRIGIT. Go and repent. Go bring it to the priests in your temple as an offering for sin. (*He steals away, the* WOMEN *follow whispering.* MARCUS *comes out from the door, and* SILAS *from the street.*)

SILAS. What happened since with the prisoner?

MARCUS (*with a scornful laugh*). The same as would happen a ball you would strike against a wall with your stick. Back again he comes to us, from the *third* of your Jewish big men.

SILAS. And did Herod do nothing at all?

MARCUS. To all the questions he put out of his mouth he got no answer. He bade him then do some miracle before him; but the Nazarene never stirred hand or foot, and said no word.

SILAS. Herod is not used to be made little of that way.

MARCUS. If he wanted talk he heard enough of it from the Chief Priests and the Scribes, that called the prisoner all the names, one worse than another, and accused him of this and that. And when it was said he had claimed to be a King, Herod put on him in mockery the purple dress of a King, and ridiculed him, and gave him to be handled by the soldiers, and made a speedy riddance of him, sending him back here to us again.

(JOEL *comes in, but stops, seeing them.*)

SILAS. Pilate has nothing to do now but to condemn him.

MARCUS. I don't know in the world wide what happened Pilate. He would seem as if unwilling to see him again, or to go against him. I never knew him to be this way before.

(*He goes on.*)

SILAS (*to* JOEL). Did you hear that? Now will you believe me saying he had his terms made with the foreign Government?

JOEL. I would never believe it unless from himself—or it might be from Pilate himself.

CROWD (*coming back from one side, as the* WOMEN *come from the other*). Pilate! Pilate!

MARCUS (*coming out*). Make way there!

(PILATE *comes out.*)

1ST MAN. Here he is! Up Pilate!

2ND MAN. Put down the Nazarene!

DANIEL. Down with him! Up the Empire! Up Cæsar!

PILATE (*holds up his hand impatiently, and speaks petulantly*). When ye brought this man to me I told you I found no fault in him touching those things whereof ye accuse him.

CROWD. Boo-oo! Boo-ooo!

PILATE. No, nor yet Herod—for I sent you to him, and you see

he found nothing worthy of death in him. I will therefore chastise him—and release him.

SILAS. You will let him go free!

CROWD. To let him off! Boo-ooo!

PILATE. Why, what evil has he done? I tell you again, I find no fault in him.

CROWD. Away with him! He is worthy of death!

PILATE. Listen! It is a custom that at the Feast I release one prisoner to you——

CROWD. Barabbas! Give us out Barabbas!

PILATE. Barabbas! That is a robber?

CROWD. Give us Barabbas!

JOEL. I would nearly sooner have Barabbas that we knew from the first to be a rogue!

PILATE. What will ye then that I do to him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

CROWD. Crucify him! Let him be crucified! (SOLDIERS *bring* CHRIST *to the door.*)

JOEL. Crucify him!

(PILATE *leads Him on to steps. He wears a crown of thorns and a purple robe.*)

PILATE. Behold the Man!

CROWD. Crucify him!

PILATE. Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him.

SILAS. We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God!

PILATE (*to* CHRIST). Speakest thou not? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?

CHRIST. Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee by God. Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

(PILATE *hesitates.*)

PILATE (*making a last cry to the people*). Shall I crucify your King?

DANIEL. We have no king but Cæsar!

SILAS (*to* PILATE, *coming in front of the crowd*). Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Cæsar. If you let this man go you are not Cæsar's friend.

(PILATE *bows his head. The* EGYPTIAN *comes out swiftly with a silver jug and basin. She splashes water over* PILATE'S *hands. He shakes the water off, rinsing his hands.*)

PILATE. I am innocent of the blood of this just person! See ye to it!

CROWD. Let him be crucified!

(*The* SOLDIERS *seize* CHRIST.)

Curtain.

ACT III

SCENE. *A roadside, the road rising in rough steps on one side; on the other, a little booth with wine and fruit, where some* SOLDIERS *are drinking.*

1ST SOLDIER (*shading his eyes, and looking up the hill.*) They are just putting up the Cross for the Nazarene.

2ND SOLDIER (*coming in from the road, throws down a hammer and some nails he is carrying, and a coil of rope, and takes some wine*). He fell carrying it. He is on the road yet. He has great courage, but his body is weak after all he went through.

3RD SOLDIER. I never heard yet for what crime he was sent to his death. He was not a thief, like the other two, or a murderer the same as Barabbas.

1ST SOLDIER. These Jewish priests that were jealous of him, they are saying. In dread more respect would be paid to him than to themselves through the feast days. They had it settled in their minds to get quit of him.

3RD SOLDIER. I wonder at Pilate giving in to them, for it was easy seen he didn't like the job.

1ST SOLDIER. There are some women making their way to the Cross that has been put up for him on the height. It's best drive them back from it. There is no use having crying and bawling going on with the sound of the hammering of the nails.

3RD SOLDIER (*goes up a step and shouts*). Send down those women out of that! They have no call to be getting into the way of our work!

2ND SOLDIER. There was a Woman following after him on the road, and that helped him up when he fell. They were saying it was his Mother.

3RD SOLDIER. I would nearly pity any mother of a son that would see him sent to such a hard death.

(*The* WOMEN *come down the steps.*)

1ST SOLDIER. Come on, now! There is no place for you there above!

1ST WOMAN. May we stop here, sir, by the side of the road?

1ST SOLDIER. I wonder what at all brings you looking at such an ugly sight?

1ST WOMAN. He is our Master and our Lord.

1ST SOLDIER. Well, keep yourselves quiet and behave yourselves, or it will be worse for you. (*To the other* SOLDIERS) Come on now to hurry them that are on the road.

(*They go off.*)

1ST WOMAN (*sitting down*). If it is long the night was, the day is longer again.

3RD WOMAN. It is a pitiful story the way he is. The reach of his hand was always good to the poor.

1ST WOMAN. He never put grief on his Mother, or on any child at all.

2ND WOMAN. Why at all does he not save himself? If he would but lift his hand there is not one of them but would fall dead.

1ST WOMAN. He is maybe weary of serving the world, with the bad treatment and the abuse he was given.

1ST WOMAN. He is the just Prince of patience. He gives kindness for hatred. (*She sings*)

He shows no malice, but love and pity,
Forgives them all with his failing breath;
The foreign soldiers that spoil our city,
That flog and drag him to shameful death.

(ST. BRIGIT *comes in from down the road.*)

They bruised his brow with their crown of briars;
They mocked him with every ugly thing;
He that could shrivel them all with fire
He held his silence, and he a King!

I call and cry to the King of Graces,
To scourge and scatter by land and sea,
To bring disgrace on their wicked faces;
To smite and shrivel that crooked tree!

2ND WOMAN. If the world was talking, the relics of the old religion would be in you yet.

ST. BRIGIT. He used to be saying, the Disciple was telling me, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for them which despitefully use you."

3RD WOMAN. It will be hard for him to say that to-day.

ST. BRIGIT. He will say it to the last. He is clean gold. Surely, there will never be any man east or west will refuse to forgive another, where our Lord gave forgiveness to his enemies.

2ND WOMAN. You did well coming here to see him with your own eyes. For this is a story will have seven shapes put on it.

1ST WOMAN. Indeed it is a heart-broken story you will have to bring back to Ireland.

ST. BRIGIT. No; but a great story and a great praise I will bring with me. I have heard him myself, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

1ST WOMAN. You would never think they would get leave to strike and scourge him the way they did.

ST. BRIGIT. I heard some saying it was written in the old prophecies, "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

3RD WOMAN. I don't know what was it brought him into this world at all. Great courage he had coming to such an unruly place. He behaved well facing it when he knew what was before him.

2ND WOMAN. The worst at all is to think of the poor Mother. Why wouldn't they leave him to the death that is allotted by nature? It is too soon his candle to be spent.

1ST WOMAN. No smile and no laughter will be upon her lips for ever.

ST. BRIGIT. Never fear there will be joy in her heart in the years to come, knowing that he has visited and redeemed his people.

(*She goes back by the road.*)

3RD WOMAN. Her darling to be taken from her that is comely without and within. And he young, that I thought his keeners would not yet be born.

2ND WOMAN. That is the best (*laughs to herself*). Isn't it happy for him to go out of our sight, while he is in his bloom, and the ugliness of the body in age never to be remembered against him.

1ST WOMAN (*singing*).

The first great joy that Mary had, it was the joy of one,
To see her own son Jesus to suck at her breastbone;

2ND WOMAN.

The next great joy that Mary had it was the joy of two
To see her own son Jesus to make the lame to go!

3RD WOMAN.

The third great joy that Mary had, it was the joy of three
To see her own son Jesus to make the blind to see!

(*The* CROWD *rushes on from the road,* DANIEL *among them.*)

1ST MAN. Hurry on till we'll get a good place!

DANIEL. You'll get no good view here, but higher up.

2ND MAN (*turning back from the steps*). The soldiers will let us go no farther.

1ST SOLDIER (*coming with others down the steps*). Let you keep back! Stop where you are. There is no leave to pass.

DANIEL (*sitting down*). I'll stop where I am, so. There's as good a chance of luck turning to you, and you sitting at your ease, as if you were thrusting after it.

2ND SOLDIER. What do you want coming here at all?

DANIEL. I have all my money spent, giving drinks to this one and that one, and little thanks for it. Where will I get my night's lodging and my bite? There is always a chance of some profit turning up in a crowd.

(*Slow music and drums heard in the distance.*)

1ST SOLDIER. Here he is coming.

2ND SOLDIER. He is not, only the thieves.

1ST SOLDIER. No, they were brought by the other road a while ago.

DANIEL. That's a pity. When we come out to see a show, the more of it we can see the better.

(SILAS *and* MARCUS *come on from the road. The crowd draw back.*)

MARCUS. A strange thing your Hebrew people thronging to see a man crucified. Why wouldn't they keep him for a circus and throw him to the wild beasts? That now is sport worth losing a day on.

SILAS. That sort of a death is not suitable to our law.

MARCUS. It is suitable enough for Octavius Cæsar. Ye are a gloomy race, and have no right notion of taking your pleasure.

SILAS. It is pleasure enough to see our enemy put down.

MARCUS. Those two thieves, now, would have made a good fight

with a lion or a thing of the kind. They had the appearance of being used to violence.

SILAS. We are satisfied with our own customs, and have no need of yours.

MARCUS. You are getting very impudent since you got your own way this morning.

SILAS. You that were mocking at our Judges! I tell you I myself picked the fun of the world out of your own Pilate, the way he went swaying from side to side.

MARCUS. Have a care now! I'd as lief give you up to the captain beyond for throwing contempt on the Government, as I'd throw an empty oyster shell into the waves!

SILAS. Let you stop putting insults on me!

MARCUS. Gabbing as if you were some great grandee, with all your gibberish about your laws! I've a mind to lodge you in a cell to learn you respect for Roman law!

(*Pushes him. He stumbles and is caught by* JOEL *who comes in.* MARCUS *goes on up the steps.*)

JOEL. My bitter curse on you, where you deceived me a while ago, making me call out against the best man the world ever saw! You have a great wrong done me! If he was not a rebel itself, his name will surely be written in the book of the people! His friendship would be better to me than all the world's gold.

SILAS. Leave handling me! What have I to do with you? You are no use to me now.

JOEL. My bitter shame! I cried out, "Crucify him!" That you may come to the same death yourself for that wicked deed!

1ST SOLDIER (*coming down steps seizes* SILAS). Here you, Jew, what are you brawling about? First with the Sergeant of Pilate's guard, and now with this vagabond!

SILAS. Take your hand off me!

1ST SOLDIER. We'll put you in a safe place till we'll have time to listen to you. (SOLDIERS *drag* SILAS *off up the steps.*)

(*A shout from the crowd—"Here he is coming!"*)

JOEL. Oh, shining God! Why couldn't we fight and beat them all! Oh, let me hide myself! His eye to fall on me my heart would break like a nut! (*He goes over to the* WOMEN, *who have stood up.*)

1ST WOMAN. You were shouting for him but yesterday.

JOEL. That's the way of it! All the generations looking for him and praying for him. We wanted him, and we got him, and what we did with him was to kill him. And that is the way it will be ever and always, so long as leaves grow upon the trees!

3RD WOMAN. He is the Lord we looked for sure enough.

JOEL. If he is or is not the Christ I cannot tell. But whether or no, he is the only whole gentleman in the world! (*He kneels. The tramp of feet is heard to the right. The* WOMEN *look down the road. They beat their hands, and cry out.*)

1ST WOMAN. Oh, my grief! To see him bound with the narrow ropes of hemp! The marks of the thorns on his brow!

2ND WOMAN. My heart is withered like the withering of the trees! (*They hide their faces in their hands and kneel.*)

(CHRIST *appears. He is still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. A* SOLDIER *carries the inscription, "I.N.R.I."—Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews—The* MOTHER *and* ST. JOHN *are following him, and* ST. BRIGIT. *She comes over to the* WOMEN. *The* SOLDIERS *stop to take wine from the booth. The procession stops.*)

CHRIST (*turning to the* WOMEN). Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

1ST WOMAN. You to be gone, who have we to go to? You have the words of eternal life!

CHRIST. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you.

1ST WOMAN. Have you any word to leave with us at all?

CHRIST. A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if you have love one to another.

1ST WOMAN. We will keep that word in our heart till our life's end.

CHRIST (*going on a step farther*). Father, the hour is come! Now I am no more in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one!

MARCUS (*coming back*). Move on, there! What is this delay for?

2ND SOLDIER (*putting his hand on* CHRIST'S *shoulder, and pushing him*). You have no leave to stop!

3RD SOLDIER. If you are the King of the Jews save yourself!

2ND SOLDIER. He trusted in God. Let him deliver him now if he will have him.

1ST SOLDIER. He might want another touch of the scourge. (*Takes up the rope from the ground and threatens him.*)

3RD SOLDIER. Bare his shoulders for it! (*They drag off his robe roughly.*)

ST. JOHN (*calling out*). Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

CHRIST. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do! (*He goes up the steps followed by the* MOTHER *and* ST. JOHN.)

1ST SOLDIER (*taking the robe*). It is a good coat. I will keep it for my share.

2ND SOLDIER. You will not! I earned it well myself!

1ST SOLDIER. I'll run my sword through it. I'll make two halves.

2ND SOLDIER. You'll spoil it splitting it. It is without any seam.

3RD SOLDIER. No, but keep it and divide it with the rest of the clothes.

2ND SOLDIER. The rest are no good. This is the only garment worth while.

1ST SOLDIER. If we had dice we'd play for it.

DANIEL. Here now, I have dice for games in my hand.

1ST SOLDIER. I'll engage you have, and for tricking. I know your sort.

2ND SOLDIER. Play for it. The highest wins. (*They go to table.*)

1ST SOLDIER (*throwing*). Six and deuce! Beat that if you can!

2ND SOLDIER (*throwing*). Four and three!

3RD SOLDIER. Deuce and ace. No luck. I'll try again.

1ST SOLDIER. You will not! It's my throw. (*Throws.*)

3RD SOLDIER. Your hurry didn't help you! It is but double three.

1ST SOLDIER. Give it now to me! (*Seizes box.*)

2ND SOLDIER (*snatching it from him*). No, it's my turn. (*Throws.*) Double six! I have it.

1ST SOLDIER. No, but nothing! They rolled off the board!

2ND SOLDIER. It was yourself that shook it! (*He seizes the robe and goes towards the steps.*)

1ST SOLDIER (*following him*). That's a lie!

3RD SOLDIER. It will be torn between you, and no use at all.

(1ST *and* 2ND SOLDIERS *go off dragging at it.*)

1ST WOMAN (*laying her hand on the arm of* 3RD SOLDIER, *and holding out a pitcher*). If ever you had kindness from a mother or a mother's son, will you bring this drink to our Lord?

3RD SOLDIER. What is it? To hasten his death?

1ST WOMAN. No, but there are sleepy herbs in it that might give a little ease from his pain. (*He takes it and goes.*)

2ND SOLDIER (*coming back*). It is here I left the hammer and the nails.

DANIEL. Here they are for you. (*He holds them out.*)

2ND SOLDIER (*takes them, hesitates and throws them down*). No, I will not. I cannot use them. There was never a man spoke like this man.

VOICE OF 1ST SOLDIER. Come on, bring the hammer. That is your job.

2ND SOLDIER. I will never lift a hand against him.

1ST SOLDIER (*coming to top of steps*). Hurry! Hurry! What ails you?

2ND SOLDIER (*to* DANIEL). Go you and drive in the nails in place of me. Here, I will give you the whole of my day's pay. (*Puts money in his hands.*)

DANIEL. Sitting still is the best. I was thinking I would not go empty out of this. Just to sit still and quiet, and profit will turn to you in the finish.

(*He goes off, taking the hammer and nails.*)

2ND SOLDIER (*calling after him*). That you may never have any quiet or any rest from wandering for ever for your share in this day's work! And as much of my curse as does not reach to you, may it reach to your tribe and to your children! (*Follows him.*)

(JUDAS *comes in from the road. He walks across shading his eyes, looking up the hill, goes out of sight a moment, and comes back with his hand over his eyes.*)

JOEL. That God may perish him!

1ST WOMAN. It is Judas that betrayed him.

2ND WOMAN. The black-hearted traitor!

3RD WOMAN. Let him go hide himself under some scalp of a rock, or in a hole in the earth, or in the thickness of the woods!

JUDAS (*putting his hands over his ears*). Oh! the sound of the hammering! What way can I ever shut it out!

JOEL. Reproach and withering on you!

1ST WOMAN. It will go hard with you on the Day of the Mountain!

3RD WOMAN. To bring him as you did to his death sod! Thursday sold to his enemies, and on Friday a sieve of holes with the nails!

ST. BRIGIT. Go ask his forgiveness even now. He never refused any.

JUDAS. What is your chattering to me? He looked at me a while ago as he passed the road. It is I myself that betrayed the Son of God!

(*He hides his face again.*)

1ST WOMAN. I declare I'd nearly pity him. It might be it was his lot, and that he had his treachery settled for him four thousand years before his birth.

JOEL. It is a heavy curse there will be on you, and a price on your

head, the same as there would be upon a wolf. It is a lone shadow you will be, going through the world.

JUDAS. Ah, what are your words and your curses, and what need is there to ring the bell against me? My heart that is turned to a black coal within me. These feet that were washed by him! These lips that kissed him! A lone shadow! Yes, and a doleful shadow, a wretched ghost, beaten by the waves of the sea. It is all there before me—black, bitter waters—bitter, winter winds. Dogs tearing, hounds hunting, a rock frozen in the waves. A wave of ice and a wave of fire—that is the wages of the betrayal of the King!

ST. BRIGIT. He is a King who will seek and save those that are lost.

JUDAS. I am going to that death and that punishment whatever it may be. And all I bring with me is the knowledge that he is the Christ that was promised to Israel, and it is little profit it will be to me, and it is hard I earned it! (*He snatches up the rope and rushes out.*)

JOEL. That noosed rope is a fitting friend to him.

1ST WOMAN. May God have mercy on him!

ST. BRIGIT. He might find kindness yet for one good deed he did, laying a wide flagstone in a desolate boggy place, where it is a great comfort to them that pass the way.

3RD SOLDIER (*coming back with pitcher*). Here is the vessel. It is full yet. When he had tasted of it he would not drink. He is a brave man. He would not shun any of the pain.

(1ST WOMAN *takes it and he goes.*)

1ST WOMAN. I could cry tears down to think of him bearing all that, and no one next or near to aid him.

ST. BRIGIT. The people of Heaven are standing waiting for him. He has beside him the right hand angel of God.

(*A great shout and clamour is heard from the hill. Then silence. The day darkens.*)

1ST WOMAN. There is coming a heavy mist.

3RD WOMAN. The song of the birds has stopped.

1ST WOMAN. There is the blessed Mother coming down the hill.

ST. BRIGIT. And with her the disciple that he loved.

(*She goes to meet them.*)

2ND WOMAN. She got her own scourge this day.

1ST WOMAN. It's no wonder a broken heart to be with her. Let her keen him and cry her fill.

(*She chants, the others joining in the caoine.*)

O what is this woman crying,
Coming down from the hillside,
Och, och, agus, Och-uch-an!
"Go, call the three Maries,
Till they keen my white darling,
Och, Och, agus Ochone O!

"Where is my child that I carried
Through three-quarters of a year?
Och, och, agus, Och-uch-an!
Have you seen my bright darling,
That never angered his Mother?
Och, Och, agus Ochone O!"

We did see him, O poor Mother!
We saw your white darling,
Och, Och, agus Och-uch-an.
A tall young man on the hillside,
His enemies all around him
And He on the Tree of Passion.
Och, Och, agus, Ochone O!

(*There is another heavy shout from the hill. The darkness increases.*)

3RD WOMAN. Here she is coming to us. (*They kneel and continue the caoine.*)

Isn't it great the pity,
The Child she crooned in her arm,
Och, Och, agus, Och-uch-an!
The spear to be in his side,
The dust to be on his head!
Och, Och, agus Ochone-O!

(*As it ends, the* MOTHER, ST. JOHN, *and* ST. BRIGIT *come on.*)

1ST WOMAN. Och! He is surely gone from us!

ST. JOHN. "It is finished!" That is what he said. And then he said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." And with that the soul parted from the body.

(*He covers his face.*)

ST. BRIGIT. He is gone from the shadows of the world to be with his Father in the Garden of Paradise.

JOEL. My bitter blame upon the place where he died! I thought it had been he would have redeemed Israel!

ST. BRIGIT. It is the whole of the Universe he has redeemed.

JOEL. Dead or alive, he will always be my Master and my King!

1ST WOMAN. There will be no candle wasted with him. It is the angels of God that will keep a watch over him.

(*The sky brightens.* JOHN *is seen looking upwards.*)

ST. JOHN. Give over keening. Look at that brightness. Listen! Listen!

ST. BRIGIT. It is like the far-off music of the Birds of the plains of Heaven.

ST. JOHN. Hush! He is speaking! (*He bends his head and listens intently.*)

2ND WOMAN. Oh! What word does he say!

ST. JOHN (*still listening and speaking slowly*). "I am He that liveth and was dead. And behold I am alive for evermore!"

1ST WOMAN. O King of Glory! He has broken before us the battle of death!

3RD WOMAN. Hush! Listen!

ST. JOHN. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

1ST WOMAN. Oh! Our white Lord!

ST. JOHN (*holding up his hand for silence, and as if hearing with greater difficulty*). "To him that overcometh and keepeth my words to the end, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God——and I will give him the Morning Star——"

ST. BRIGIT. That God may bring us to the same joy his blessed soul returned to!

THE WOMEN. O Blessed Christ!

Curtain.

DAVE

PERSONS

NICHOLAS O'CAHAN. *Elderly, very neatly dressed in old-fashioned clothes, with knee breeches.*

KATE O'CAHAN. *His wife, a good deal younger. She is winding a ball of wool from skeins on the back of a chair. She walks back and forward to this.*

TIMOTHY LOUGHLIN. *A serving man.*

JOSEPHINE LOUGHLIN. *A young girl, his niece.*

DAVE. *A youth in poor working clothes. Looks sullen and slouches. His hair hangs over his forehead.*

TIME. *A hundred years ago.*

SCENE. *A room well furnished with old-fashioned things, a settle, a chest, an armchair, a turf basket. The door left opens into a little entry; door right leads to the kitchen.* TIMOTHY *is on his knees arranging the fire.*

TIMOTHY (*shouts*). Bring in, Dave, the turf! (*No answer.*) Come on, you lazy cur! Hurry now.

(DAVE *comes in with an armful.*)

Couldn't you come when I called you?

DAVE (*sullenly*). I could if I brought the turf wet.

TIMOTHY. Don't be giving impudence. You know well you were scheming or slouching around some hole or corner.

DAVE. Have it your own way so. (*He is putting the turf in the basket.*)

TIMOTHY. If I had my own way it's walking the road you would be—put out of this house.

DAVE. I wouldn't please you to go out, or it's out of the reach of your tongue I'd be gone before now.

TIMOTHY. I'll get quit of you in spite of yourself. Hurry on, now, go get another load of the turf. What, now, is keeping that little girl of mine so long in the village?

DAVE. There she is at the door. (JOSEPHINE *enters as he goes out.*)

JOSEPHINE. I left the message for the driver of the long car, that Nicholas O'Cahan and the Missis would be wanting a seat to the town when he'll be passing.

TIMOTHY. You took your time doing that. Idling in the shop I'll engage you were, and the dark of the evening coming on. Fingering ribbons and fooleries.

JOSEPHINE. You're out there. I was not in the shop at all.

TIMOTHY. What kept you so? Fooling and gabbing with idlers, the same as yourself. Here now is the Missis.

(KATE *comes in from the other door.*)

TIMOTHY (*getting up*). Josephine that is after bidding the car to wait for you and the Master, ma'am, to bring you to the town for the night.

KATE. I thought you were talking as if vexed with someone.

TIMOTHY. So I am vexed with that lad that's slow bringing in the turf. Come on, now—come, fill up the basket. (DAVE *comes in and begins putting in more sods.*) And I was telling this niece of mine she had too much time lost with chattering down in the village.

JOSEPHINE. Well, I was not chattering or saying any word at all —but listening.

TIMOTHY. That's it. To some person with as little sense as yourself.

JOSEPHINE. You're out again. It was to a holy man was preaching in the street.

KATE (*interested*). Was it a priest that was preaching—or a friar?

JOSEPHINE. I don't rightly know. He was a stranger—a sort of a missioner. Asking help he was for the people of Iar Connacht that are down under the fever and the famine.

TIMOTHY. What brought him questing here? All the help we have to give, it is for ourselves we should keep it as is right.

KATE. Tell me, now, Josephine, what account did he give?

JOSEPHINE. The fever is running through the country, he was saying. It is a terrible scourge. It is what he said, the people are dying in empty walls with no roof over them, or in a shed in the haggards, or out by the side of the road.

KATE. God help them, they are surely under great trouble.

(DAVE *has stopped filling basket, and is listening.*)

TIMOTHY. The right place for them is the poorhouse, that was built for the like of that class.

JOSEPHINE. It is what he was saying, the poorhouses are filled till there is no more room in them. The people are dying, he said, without help of priest or friar or anything at all.

KATE. That is a terrible story, if it is true.

JOSEPHINE. And worse again——

KATE. There could hardly be worse than that.

JOSEPHINE. The breath would hardly be gone out of them, he said, before they'd be put into the earth. No one to give them burial, but a bag made and the body put in it and thrown in a hole in the wild bog, and the shaking sod closing over their head. And he said "in Connemara over it is the dogs bring the bodies out of the houses, and ask no leave!"

KATE (*puts her hand over her eyes*). The poor creatures! What are we doing that we cannot come to their help! The Lord have mercy on them, and bring them to the comfort of Heaven!

TIMOTHY. I wouldn't believe a word of it. It's certain the half of them should be in gaol, as it's likely the gaol fever is rotting the most of them.

JOSEPHINE. I tell you the Missioner said it, and he rising up his hand.

TIMOTHY. Talk is easy. It's hard trust any of Adam's race.

DAVE (*comes a step forward, lets fall the sods of turf from his arm. To* JOSEPHINE). Where is that man was preaching? Is he in the street yet?

TIMOTHY (*taking hold of his arm*). Mind you own business. Have you the gap in the wall settled yet? Come on, now. There are things to make ready before the master will make his start.

(*Pushes* DAVE *before him out of door.* KATE *takes her skein of wool that is on the back of a chair, and begins winding it into a ball.*)

JOSEPHINE. I'm in dread, Ma'am, you'll get a wetting going to the town. There is rain overhead yet, and all that came down through the night and through the morning is lying in pools and in splashes on the road.

KATE. What is weather and a wetting beside what we are after hearing? That is as pitiful a story as any ever I heard.

JOSEPHINE. Ah, the weather might cheer up before you will make your start. It's myself would like to be going with you, and to see all the grandeur and the people of the town.

(*She goes into kitchen as* NICHOLAS *comes in.*)

NICHOLAS (*closes a book he has been reading as he comes in, keeping his finger in the place*). This is a great book I got from the

pedlar. I nearly begrudge going to the town, and not to be reading it through from start to finish.

KATE. Indeed, I myself have not much heart to go there after all I have been hearing of the fever and the famine, but to stop and say a prayer for all that are under trouble.

NICHOLAS. Pup, pup, woman. You know your witness is required at the court-house along with my own in that case that concerns Thomas O'Cahan's right of way, and he my third cousin by the two great-grandfathers. Stop now interrupting me till you'll hear what this old poet says (*sits down in his armchair and reads*):

The Kingdom started up altogether,
To put out the Danes who put trouble on Ireland;
The Kennedys and the strength of the Lorcans,
Morans and Brogans armed and dressed (looks up)

—the whole of them were in the battle of Clontarf.

KATE. The poor men!

NICHOLAS. Don't be interrupting me!

They travelled from Munster as may be read,
O'Sullivan out from the west of Ireland— (excited)

Ha! Here it is put down clear and plain!

KATE. What is it?

NICHOLAS. The name I was in search of! And that I made sure should be in the poem. And that is my own name.

KATE. Is it Nicholas O'Cahan?

NICHOLAS. What about Nicholas? That is a name is well enough, but that likely may not have been in the world in those early times. Listen, now:

O'Donovan of the deer, O'Maher and O'Cahan.

The Battle of Clontarf was not fought without them being in it!

KATE. That should be a long time ago.

NICHOLAS. Near to a thousand years!

KATE. And was he killed in it?

NICHOLAS. Killed or not killed what signifies? How do I know did ever he strike a blow, or get a blow? Battle or no battle he would be dead now anyway.

KATE. It is for the people dying of the hunger at this time I am fretting. You might have heard the Missioner down in the village?

NICHOLAS. Wait now till I'll see is it put down were there any more of my old fathers in the world at that time. O'Malley, O'Mara

—O'Shaughnessy. It is a great book. You would know, reading it, what people are worth nothing, and which of them are worth while.

KATE. We'd mostly know that living anear them.

NICHOLAS. Believe me, high blood and ancient blood is the best property at all to run in a family.—Do you know what I'm thinking?

KATE. I do not, without you'd tell me.

NICHOLAS. It is going through my mind that if the Lord had sent us a son we would find it hard to make our mind up what name to bestow on him, among all the big names in my family.

KATE (*coming back with her ball of wool, interested*). I used often to be thinking I would call him Patrick.

NICHOLAS. Not at all. It is well enough for people with no genealogy to go seeking a name among the saints. But where there is family, it is right to show respect to the family. I should have a good deal of quality belonging to me.

KATE. I was only saying——

NICHOLAS. Go easy, now! It is natural for you to be running down race. I am finding no fault with yourself. But it is the first time an O'Cahan ever joined with a Heniff! You'll be saying, I suppose, that lad Dave, that is a foundling is not far from being equal to myself!

KATE (*turning back to her chair*). You need not be running down my people. I never saw poverty out of my father or my mother. Everyone belonging to me came from the old stock of the parish, and my grandmother coming to Mass every Sunday on a pillion and a black mare!

NICHOLAS. Don't be talking. Where is Timothy? (*calls*) Timothy! I must tell him about the antiquity of the O'Cahans.

TIMOTHY (*coming in*). I sent the message, sir, to the driver of the long car——

NICHOLAS. Stop a minute and listen. (*Takes up book.*) Did you ever hear news of the families that drove out the Danes, the Lochlanach, from Ireland?

TIMOTHY. What way would I hear it, sir? I have not learning like yourself.

NICHOLAS. Long ago as it was, Timothy, near to a thousand years, they were not without one of my own race and name.

TIMOTHY. Why wouldn't there be one of them? It's easy know that out of yourself—or twenty-one of them! The O'Cahans are a great breed surely. It's the finest thing in the known world to have high generations behind you.

NICHOLAS. It is proud my third cousin Thomas O'Cahan will be to-morrow, hearing he had a far-off father living close on a thousand years ago. Hurry on, now, Kate, and make ready for the road.

KATE. I will, so soon as I'll have this ball of wool wound. I have but to put on my bonnet and my shawl. I hope no bad thing will happen the house, and we away from it through the whole of the night time.

NICHOLAS. Timothy Loughlin will be in charge, and the little girl Josephine, his niece, till such time as we'll come back to-morrow.

TIMOTHY. Believe me, sir, I'll take good care of all—only that lad——

NICHOLAS. Give me here my Sunday boots (*begins taking off the boots he is wearing*).

TIMOTHY (*bringing boots*). It is what I was saying, that lad Dave——I'd sooner you'd bring him along with you. It is hard for me keep control of him. He is a bad class of a scamp.

NICHOLAS. I have it in my mind you were making some report of him a while ago.

TIMOTHY. I give you my word, sir, in the twelve-month I lived with you, I had but the half of it peaceable, before that lad was brought in here. (*He kneels to lace* NICHOLAS'S *boots.*)

NICHOLAS. I have some memory it was yourself brought him in from where he was standing, a *spailpin* with his spade in his hand, seeking work at the Easter fair. Saying, you were, he would be easy brought on his back, having no kindred to be running to.

TIMOTHY. There is not a day but I'll hear some troublesome thing of him. Rambling and idling, card-playing up in the mountains—that's where he was through last night.

KATE. Ah, there's boys will do that sort of thing to the end of time.

TIMOTHY. He's tricky, and has too much tricks in him. He is a holy terror.

KATE. Well, he should be as God made him.

NICHOLAS. Do not be taking his side now. It was against my own judgment I brought him into the house. A lad whose race and kindred no one knows, and whose father and mother no one knows.

KATE. He is but a youth of a boy. It's a pity to put on him the sins of the generations before him.

NICHOLAS. He has no generations before him, bad or good, to give him that excuse.

TIMOTHY. That's it. A by-child reared in the workhouse. It's likely a tinker's brat.

NICHOLAS. That's a class I don't like, and I wouldn't like it, and I'm a man that couldn't like it.

KATE. He was maybe born into his troubles. It's easy be good having good means and a good way and plenty of riches.

NICHOLAS. Hurry on, now, Kate, and make ready. Give me here the key till I'll lock this book in the chest. (*Takes keys and puts one in the lock.*)

TIMOTHY. The vagabone! It's a skelping he should get to bridle him that would take the skin off him. He is bad out and out. He brought badness into the world with him, the same as you might bring a birthmark.

KATE (*going over to take last threads of the skein off the chair*). Maybe so, maybe so. I never got learning out of books. But it's often I heard said there is no child comes into the world but brings with him some grain of the wisdom of Heaven. It's the mother can know that, watching his little ways. The Spirit of God given in the beginning wasn't given to one or to two. I myself can tell that much if I never had a child of my own. (*Goes.*)

TIMOTHY (*as* NICHOLAS *is about to lock the chest*). There is Dave coming. Have a care, sir, where you would conceal your choice things——

(DAVE *comes in.*)

TIMOTHY. Where were you?

DAVE. Where you bade me go. Putting up the gap in the wall——

TIMOTHY. I'll believe that when I'll see myself is it done. It's likely you would make a poor job of it with the drowsiness is on you after being out rambling through the night time.

DAVE. I hear what you're saying.

NICHOLAS (*who is turning over the pages of his book, and putting a mark in*). Tut, tut, try and behave now.

TIMOTHY. You see the way he is, sir, a sullen miserable hound.

NICHOLAS. It is right you should learn behaviour. But I would not be hard on you, as I would on one who had a good rearing and a good name.

DAVE. What fault have you to find with my name? Anyway I got no other name. Dave, short and sharp like you would shout for a dog.

TIMOTHY. Have some shame on you! I tell you, you not to have come into the world would be no loss at all.

NICHOLAS. That's enough, Timothy. I don't know where are my glasses? (*He puts down the book and looks for them.*)

TIMOTHY. Hearken now. Your master is going away for one night—or two nights. I myself will be in charge of all here. I lay it on you that you will not be drinking or stealing, or be going to night sports or dance-houses with scamps and schemers, gambling or smoking or snuffing—fighting and quarrelling—bringing bad lads into the house on top of me.

DAVE (*with a bitter laugh*). Go on with your A.B.C. Put on me all the sins you can find to put on me, and I'll not deny them! Swearing big oaths and blasphemy! To laugh at my neighbour's downfall! To make nothing of breaking the Ten Commandments! I've a right to be put running with a price on my head, the same as a wild dog of the hills.

TIMOTHY. Oh, to listen to him! It is to the assizes he should be dragged by the hair of his head!

DAVE. Have a care now. I could put curses out of myself as quick as you!

NICHOLAS (*putting on his hat*). Leave off that uproar and go in there to the Missis. (*He goes. Calls out.*) Hurry now, Kate, or we'll miss the car. Dave will bring out all your little packages and wearables.

(KATE *comes out, followed by* DAVE, *with packages. She is dressed for the journey.*)

TIMOTHY. God speed you, sir, and come back to us safe and sain. I'll mind the house well. (*They go out.*) It's a pity you're not bringing that lad before the judge that might put the terror of the law on him!

(*He turns back as* JOSEPHINE *comes in, bringing a kettle in her hand.*)

JOSEPHINE. Oh, are they gone! (*Calls from door*) Oh, Ma'am, won't you stop a minute, and I'll have the tea wet for you! (*She turns round.*) She beckons she could not come back. (*She puts kettle down on hearth.*)

TIMOTHY (*looking from window*). They are going down the road in a hard trot. I was in dread the wet would come down again, and turn them back from making their start.

JOSEPHINE (*flinging herself into* NICHOLAS'S *armchair*). My joy go with them in a bottle of moss. If they never come back they'll be no great loss! Here's his old book on the floor! (*Kicks it.*)

TIMOTHY (*giving it a kick, and then picking it up*). Himself and his ancient generations! And looking at myself over the top of it as

if I was dirt! If I didn't make up my mind to humour him I'd like well to face him on the head of that.

JOSEPHINE. He hasn't a great deal of sense. Will you look what they left after them? Their whole bunch of keys. Stuck in the lock-hole of the chest one of them is.

TIMOTHY. Do you say so! I never knew Nicholas O'Cahan leave that chest open till now.

JOSEPHINE (*opening it*). Well, we'll take a view of it. Here is a grand shawl I never saw. It would suit myself well. (*Puts it on, gets up on a chair to look at herself in the mirror.*) A great pity it to be lying there idle. (*Looks in chest again.*) And the silk skirt she put on at the time of the wedding at the Keanes. (*Slips it on.*) I would be well pleased to wear silk clothes, and to have a lady's life.

TIMOTHY (*who has taken the keys and opened the cupboard*). Here is where he keeps his cellar. (*Takes out a jar, pours some of its contents into a glass, and drinks it off. Pours some more into the glass and leaves it on the table.*) That's good stuff, and no mistake.

JOSEPHINE (*kneeling at the chest*). Linen sheets as white as if they were for her burying—and towels of the finest flax, fit for any bishop, or any big lord.

TIMOTHY (*stooping over chest*). Here is some weighty thing——

JOSEPHINE. A teapot—and a milk jug. Is it silver they are?

TIMOTHY (*examining*). White pewter they might be—no it's silver, sure enough.

JOSEPHINE (*putting her hand deeper in the chest*). There is some weighty thing here below—a stocking——

TIMOTHY. Give it here to me. (*Unrolls it.*) Why wouldn't it be weighty, and the foot of it being full of golden guineas! (*Shakes it.*)

JOSEPHINE. Gold! That is better again than silver.

TIMOTHY. What use is it to him where he has full and plenty? He cannot bring it with him to the tomb. (*Starts, and drops stocking.*) There is some noise!

JOSEPHINE (*getting up, goes to window*). It is but thunder. I was thinking it would be coming with the weight of blackness gathering overhead. There now is the rain pouring down.

TIMOTHY (*taking stocking again, and weighing it in his hand*). By cripes! if I got this I'd knock a good turn out of it.

DAVE (*comes in unheard, shakes the rain from his hat, claps his hands, and calls ironically*). God bless the work!

TIMOTHY (*hastily stuffing stocking into his pocket while* JOSEPHINE *shuts lid of chest*). What brings you snaking in here, idling and spying around?

DAVE. It's well for yourselves it is not Nicholas O'Cahan that came in and his Missis. (*He takes up the glass of whiskey, and drinks it off.*)

TIMOTHY. If they did itself what signifies? I'm not like yourself that no one would trust with a fourpenny bit without he'd keep his two eyes fixed on you through the hours of the day and night.

DAVE. You can save your chat. I know you well to be a class of a man that is gathering up for himself. You not to have crookedness in you, how would you go picturing it in every other one? I know well what happened the three lambs you told Nicholas O'Cahan were torn and ate with the fox!

TIMOTHY. You'll go bringing every lie and every bad story to him, I suppose?

DAVE. Why would I? It is not for him I ever said a prayer, or to please him I'll ever turn informer.

TIMOTHY. You'd best not. There's many a thing I can say about yourself.

DAVE. Do your best! There is no wrong thing ever I did since I came to the place but you have it told out ere this, and ten times as much told, and the most made of it, and the worst, the way I never got a penny in my hand for wages, but all stopped for fines or for punishment. I don't know at all what is it holds me back from doing every crime and every robbery, when there could not be put upon me a worse name for badness than what is put upon me now.

TIMOTHY. What could there be in you but badness, you that were left at the side of a ditch by vagabones of tinkers that were travelling the roads of the world since the day of the Crucifixion!

DAVE. Didn't I hear enough of that story the seventeen years I am in the world? In the poorhouse, in the street, in this house, nothing but the one bad word. I got no chance in any corner but what my two hands gave me and God! I don't know in the world wide what kept me back that I didn't kill and destroy the whole of ye, and bring down the roof over your head. I declare to my God it's often I'd have choked the breath out of yourself and your master if it wasn't there is a look of pity in the old woman's face, if she hasn't the courage to stretch a hand to me itself.

TIMOTHY. Why would any Christian stretch a hand to you or the like of you?

DAVE. What now is the worst thing and the most thing I could do to punish the world and the whole of ye?

JOSEPHINE. Ah, let you quieten down, and not be shouting to call in the country entirely.

DAVE. To put a wisp of lighted straw in among the lumber in the chest, and to put another in the thatch of the roof? To burn the house and all that's in it, and to leave the whole of ye without a roof over your head! That is what I owe to the world that gave me nothing only insult since ever I made my start upon its plains! (*He begins flinging things into the chest.*)

JOSEPHINE (*seizing his arm*). Stop, now—can't you only let on to have burned them, and we ourselves will share with you whatever it's worth while.

(TIMOTHY *hastily collects what things are best in the chest and puts them in the basket, from which he throws out the turf.*)

DAVE. Bring here and throw on them the vessel of sheep's fat was rendered for to dip the candles! That will make a bonefire will sparkle up to the rafters of the roof. I'll put fire to the house, and all that's in it—only that jar I'll bring out on the road till I'll call to some of the wild class—thieves and sheepstealers, and the worst of the world's rogues! (*To* TIMOTHY) It's yourself should come drink with me then! (*He seizes a handful of paper thrown out from the chest, and lights a twist of it at the fire.*)

JOSEPHINE. There is someone opening the door. Who could be coming in on this night of thunder and of rain?

DAVE (*going to door with the lighted wisp in his hand*). Come in, come in fellow law-breakers! There's a fire lighting will make you a ladder to the stars! There is whiskey before you in the jar!

(NICHOLAS *and* KATE O'CAHAN *come in, she shaking the rain from the umbrella she holds before her.* DAVE *falls back.*)

NICHOLAS. Dave! Leave down that wisp of fire in the hearth! Are you gone clean mad! (*Snatches wisp from him, and puts it out.*)

(TIMOTHY *rushes at* DAVE *from behind, gives him a violent blow, and strikes him down. He falls heavily with a cry, striking his head against a chair, and lies senseless.*)

KATE. Oh, is it killed he is!

TIMOTHY. Lift him up on the settle till I bind him to it. (*He and* NICHOLAS *lift and bind him with the cord that has bound the parcels.*)

NICHOLAS. You did well to down a lad of that sort. He is a terrible type of a ruffian.

TIMOTHY. He's one of the old boy's comrades. If you had seen him ten minutes ago, he was all one with a wild beast. (*He binds* DAVE'S *feet.*)

KATE. I give him up now. He is a holy terror to the whole world.

TIMOTHY. It would be well to put a gag in his mouth.

JOSEPHINE. He can say nothing. He has his senses lost with the dint of the fall.

TIMOTHY. With the dint of drunkenness. But I now have something to say. Look now the way the room is. He that got hold of the keys—it's likely picked them from your pocket, and he attending you along the road——

KATE. Oh, no! I couldn't hardly believe that!

TIMOTHY. Myself and the little girl being in the kitchen—attending to the work we had to do—and when we came in—there as you see—(*points to chest*)——

KATE. Ah, to look at the way all is tossed and turned. No, but the choice things put within in the basket.

TIMOTHY. He was to bring them away through the darkness——

NICHOLAS. He should be a thief out and out.

TIMOTHY. He'd take the sheet from your side, with respects to you. And when he got at the drink——

KATE. Ah, it should be the drink that did it——

TIMOTHY. He drank the devil into him. He rose the shovel at me to let my blood, and maybe knock out my brains. Only for I have a good coat on my shoulders he'd split me.

NICHOLAS. The Lord be praised he has no family to bring under disgrace!

TIMOTHY. And worse again. He was to put a light in the clothes that's within the chest—and in the rafters, and to burn the house entirely, the way you would not see all he had robbed. He was on the brink of doing it!

KATE (*covering her face with her hands*). Oh, tell me no more. The fire is the last of all!

TIMOTHY (*to* JOSEPHINE). Here's my little girl can bear witness did he call for the pan of sheep's tallow for to give a heart to the flame.

JOSEPHINE (*sullenly*). You can tell your own story without me.

NICHOLAS. I will commit him to justice in the morning. Let the Sheriff come bring him away with his men.

TIMOTHY. It is this very minute he should be brought away. He is that crafty you couldn't trust him not to make his escape. He might rise up in his senses and break his cords and make an attack on us all.

NICHOLAS. It is likely the car-driver went no farther than the post-house at the cross. Out on the car, and the rain down, we got

more wet than all the men of the world. You should go around the whole of the province before you would come to the town.

KATE. The flood had us made fools of. The water on the public road had leave to cover the bridge.

Josephine. Oh, let me loosen your cloak, ma'am. You are wet-drowned and perished.

(*She takes* KATE'S *cloak and bonnet and shakes them before the fire.*)

TIMOTHY. To follow the car-driver to the post-house, and to catch him, he could bring word to the barracks to send a sergeant to our aid. Let you go tell him that sir, and I'll stop and mind this lad.

NICHOLAS. Not at all, but you will come holding the lantern. The night is come on, and the road is as slippery as a road of ice. (*To* KATE) We'll be back in a while's time.

KATE. Oh, what way can I stop here in the room after all has happened. The fright is gone into my heart!

(*She takes cloak and bonnet from* JOSEPHINE *and goes through door to kitchen.*)

NICHOLAS (*sarcastically*). The girl Josephine will maybe have the courage to stop for ten minutes, or twelve minutes, of time to guard you against a lad that has lost his senses and is tied with knots and with a rope.

(*They go out,* TIMOTHY *carrying lantern.*)

JOSEPHINE (*stands looking out after them*). I'll go back to my mother's friends in the village. I'm not willing to stop longer in this place, and my uncle beckoning me to tell lies. (*She slips out, knocking over the umbrella that is in her way. Bangs the door after her. The room is almost dark.* DAVE *stirs and moans.* KATE, *coming back, goes over and looks at him. She lights a candle, then goes to him again.*)

KATE. They were surely too hasty and too hard, treating him the way they did. I would hardly believe looking at him he could be so bad as what they say. And if he was itself, is it his fault, being as he was a child without a home? (*She touches his hair.*) There is blood on it, and a sharp wound upon his head.

DAVE (*cries out*). Where am I? Loosen my hands. I cannot move!

KATE. Lie quiet, now, and I will do what I can for you.

(*She takes one of the fine towels from the chest, takes the silver bowl and pours water into it from the kettle.*)

DAVE. Let me up out of this! Are they gone out, the cowards!

My thousand curses on them! Loosen my hands till I will light a wisp in earnest! I'll get my revenge on them! That death may perish them! That I may see them kicked roaring through the provinces! Oh, there is a sting of pain—I cannot move—I cannot see—the blood is coming into my eyes. (*His voice fails as his head sinks back, and he lies still.*)

KATE. Close your eyes now till I'll wash the blood from them. (*She rolls up a sheet, and puts it as a pillow under his head, and washes the blood from his face.*) Here now is a knife. I will cut the cords from your hands (*does so*), and from your feet. (*He moves his limbs, and then lies quite still.*) He is in a doze of weakness. The poor child, all of them telling him he was bad, what way could he believe there was the breath of God in him? (*He moans as she washes the blood from his hair.*) Astray in the lonesome world, he never met with kindness or the love of kindred, to make his heart limber. (*She stoops and listens to his breathing.*) That he may get comfort in his sleep, where he is used to little comfort in his waking! That is all I can do for him now, but to bless him with the sign of Christ's cross. (*She makes the sign over him, and sits down on a chair near the fire and bows her head.*) Oh, King of Mercy come to his help! He is as lonesome as a weaned lamb gone astray among the stones. It is as if he had lost his way in the world, and been bruised on the world's roads. The dust has darkened his eyes, it is hard for him lift his head into the light. He is under clouds of trouble. Bring him to the dawn of the white day. Send a blessing on him from the Court of the Angels! (*She sings*)

There lust and lucre cannot dwell,
There envy bears no sway,
There is no hunger, heat nor cold,
But pleasure every day.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green,
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

Quite through the trees with silver sound
The flood of life doth flow
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit
And evermore do sing!

(*Music is heard outside as she ceases.*)

There is music outside—sweet quieting music. It might be some poor wandering fiddler going the road through the provinces. (*She stands up and looks at* DAVE, *then sits down again facing him.*) He is sleeping very easy. There is surely someone having a wish for him, in or out of the world.

DAVE (*moves and mutters, then raises himself on his elbow as if listening. He laughs*). I am coming—I could not see the path, but I heard the music and the laughing—merry laughter, not mocking. Is it me you're calling brother? It is long since I was called by that name. Am I your brother, and you with your head held so high? I see the door open—but there is a dyke between us. Reach me out your hand—it is hard to get over the dyke. There is the music again. (*He closes his eyes.*)

KATE. He is maybe listening to the Birds of Heaven. It is sometimes a vision is sent through the passion sleep of the night.

DAVE (*he has moved a little, but is still listening*). I had a bad dream. I dreamed I was on a rough road—with ugly words—with mean company—the mud was splashed on me and the dirt. (*Listens.*) I will, I will do your bidding as it is your will. I will go back till I have leave to come to you—till such time as you will beckon me to come. (*He lays down his head and sleeps again.*)

KATE. He surely got comfort in his sleep. There is a bright appearance on his face.

DAVE (*starting up*). Where am I? What is this place?

KATE (*standing up, and coming nearer*). Where were you, agra?

DAVE. Some good place it was—a very green lawn. It had no bounds to its beauty. (*Puts his hand over his eyes.*)

KATE. It was surely a good dream.

DAVE. There were some that held the hand to me. Who were they? I was to find something. Oh! it is going astray on me! I cannot keep it in my mind!

KATE. It will likely come back to you again.

DAVE. It was as if all the herbs of summer were in blossom—I think no one could be sick or sorry there. I would nearly say it had what should be the sound and the feeling of home.

KATE. It was maybe not in this world you saw that good harbour.

DAVE. And a very laughable thing. It was nearly like as if I was a king's son or a great gentleman. I could not but laugh thinking that. (*He lays down his head.*)

KATE (*moving away*). It is nearly a pity he had not the power to awake at the time that door was open. It is likely he will walk with his head up from this out, for it may be it was himself he saw in that dream.

DAVE (*sitting up on the side of the settle*). Tell me, now, will it ever chance me to get there again?

KATE. It will surely at the last, with the help of God.

DAVE. I will never be content or satisfied till I will come again to that dream.

KATE. You will come to it again surely, and it will be no dream.

DAVE. I want to be in it now.

KATE. Any place that has the love of God in it is a part of that garden. You have maybe brothers under trouble to reach a hand to, and to beckon them to it, as there was a hand reached out to you.

DAVE. What way could I do that, being as I am all badness, without goodness or grace?

KATE. Poor child, it is because they were always putting a bad name on you that you don't know you are good.

DAVE. Good—you are the first ever said that to me.

KATE. It is certain the Man Above never sent you here without some little flame of His own nature being within you.

DAVE. That is a great thought if it is true.

KATE. It is true, surely. Mind you never let that flame be quenched in you.

(DAVE *buries his face in his hands.*)

KATE. You might maybe sleep again. The Lord be with you by noon and by night from this out, in the day and in the darkness! (*Goes taking candle.*)

VOICE OF NICHOLAS (*at the door*). I hear no sound. It is likely his senses are astray from him yet.

VOICE OF TIMOTHY. A great pity it failed us to get word to the sergeant. With all the run I put on myself, the car was gone before me.

(*They come inside.*)

NICHOLAS. It will be time enough to get help in the morning. He is well tied and bound.

TIMOTHY. He to start defaming or blaspheming, it's what we'll put a gag over his mouth. Or to redden the tongs, and threaten him

with cruelty. It's little myself for the world would care he never to rise up again. He is a danger to the whole of the universe.

NICHOLAS. Bring in here the lantern before we'll fall over some chair.

(TIMOTHY *brings it in at the same moment as* KATE *comes back with the candle.* DAVE *stands up.*)

TIMOTHY (*going behind* NICHOLAS). His hands are free! He'll do murder on us!

NICHOLAS (*seizing a chair, and holding it up*). Have a care now!

DAVE (*as if surprised*). I have no wish to do hurt or harm.

TIMOTHY. Do not trust him!

NICHOLAS. It is best for you quit this house before any worse thing might come about!

DAVE. I will go. I think I did some foolish thing a while ago. (*Puts his hand over his eyes as if trying to remember*). There was anger on me—I must have done with foolishness.

NICHOLAS. Whether or no, you will go do it in some other place than this.

TIMOTHY. That's right—let him go beg his bread.

(DAVE *goes towards the door.*)

KATE. Ah, Dave, stop awhile! I would be sorry to see you go begging your bread.

DAVE. It would not be for honour, I to go quest or beg. I am going out as I came in, with my spade and the strength of my two hands that are all my estate. I am going in search of—to give help to—(*passes his hand over his eyes*) my people.

TIMOTHY. It is in the gaols you will likely find them, or among those paupers that are rotting with the fever, and are thrown out by the side of the road.

DAVE (*turning back, his eyes shining*). That is it! Those are the ones I will go to! The miserable people the preacher was seeking aid for. I will go look for them in Connacht over, and through the whole wilderness of Connemara!

TIMOTHY. Much good you'll do coming to them, unless drinking and scheming!

DAVE (*taking up his spade and hat*). If it should fail me to earn a handful of meal to keep the life in them, I can show service to the dead. Those that die on the roadside I will not leave to be dragged by a dog, or swallowed down in a boghole. If I cannot make out a couple of boards to put around them, I will weave a straw mat with my hands. If the dead-bells do not ring for them, I will waste a white candle for their wake!

KATE. Oh! You aren't hardly fit for that work, and your cheeks so pale, and the drops of blood on your brow.

DAVE. I give you my word I never felt so merry or so strong. I am like one that has found his treasure and must go share it with his kin. Why wouldn't I be airy doing that? (*Goes out.*)

TIMOTHY. A good riddance. I hate the living sight of him. Strutting out like a lord on the mall!

KATE. Stop your bad talk, Timothy. He is a good boy, and a decent boy, and a boy that doesn't deserve it from God or man.

TIMOTHY. He is a thief and a robber. I will swear to it before any judge. Dave is a lad that belongs to the gallows.

JOSEPHINE (*who has come in and heard his last words*). I hear what you are saying, and it is not truth. I saw Dave going down the road, and I have it in my mind it was your lies turned him out. (*Comes forward.*)

TIMOTHY. Take care what you are saying!

JOSEPHINE. I know well what I am saying. Give up now to Nicholas O'Cahan what you have your hand on at this minute, and are keeping for your own profit. Hold him, sir! ——

(TIMOTHY *goes towards door, but* NICHOLAS *seizes his arms from behind, and while he struggles she tears his pocket open and bag falls on to floor.* NICHOLAS *picks it up.*)

NICHOLAS. The girl is speaking truth. It is best for you to quit this. It is often it came across me that you, having the bad word so ready on your tongue should have some bad drop in yourself. But I made allowance for you, because of you being of a poor class, and of no ancient family or good blood.

TIMOTHY. Ancient, is it? Let me tell you that if your family is ancient my own is more ancient again! Yourself and your generations and your Battle of Clontarf, that was for driving out the Danes! My own family was of the Danes, and came in with the Danes, and it's likely were long in the country before those families were born that drove them out! The seed and breed of the Loughlans is more ancient, and is seventeen times better than any O'Cahan at all!

NICHOLAS. Of all the impudence! Quit this house before I'll give you up to the Sheriff that will put you in the dock! (*He takes up his book and hurls it at him.* TIMOTHY *escapes by the door. He sinks into an armchair.*)

KATE (*tearfully*). That is best. He had a bad thought of everyone, and that breeds badness in a house.

JOSEPHINE. Will you put me out, Ma'am, along with him, or will you let me stop and care you?

KATE (*tearfully*). I'll put no one out. But the world is turned to be very queer. Too many hard knocks, and I do be tired in my legs. I've near a mind to go follow that poor lad that went out, not having a red halfpenny to handle, and wear out what is left of my life poor and banished like himself. And maybe get more respect than ever I got here, with my name not showing out in any old book!

NICHOLAS (*agitated*). What is on you, Kate? Don't be talking about leaving me, and the way the wheel is going around. I take my oath I will never bring down my pedigree upon you again the longest day I'll live! (*Gets up and flings the book on the hearth.*) Let it turn to ashes and my joy go with it, for nothing in the mighty world will ever make me open it again!

KATE. I'm in dread you will be fretting after it yet, and make that a new reproach against my name.

NICHOLAS. Well, will this content you, that I'll give up my own name, and call myself Heniff from this out?

KATE. You cannot do that, and Nicholas O'Cahan being cut in clean letters on the slab you have ordered for your burying.

NICHOLAS. Ah, my poor Kate, what can I do to satisfy you? Listen now, you have leave to call that lad Dave back here from his poverty, if it is your will.

KATE (*goes to the window and looks into the darkness, and then turns back*). I wouldn't ask it. God has surely some great hand in him. He had the look of being very glad in the mind. His head held high, and a light on his brow as bright as the bow of heaven. May friends and angels be around him and steer him to a good harbour in the Paradise of the King!

Curtain.

LADY GREGORY ON PLAY-WRITING

. . . play-writing . . . came as if by accident. I think my preparation for it had been in great part that London life, that education in talking. For what is the substance of drama but conversation clipped and arranged? I have also told in *Our Irish Theatre* of my preparation in working with Yeats. "He who loseth himself findeth himself", for I had no thought of any personal benefit to myself when I helped in his work.

— *Seventy Years*

. . . I began by writing bits of dialogue, when wanted. Mr. Yeats used to dictate parts of *Diarmuid and Grania* to me, and I would suggest a sentence here and there. . . . Mr. Yeats says [:] . . . "when our Irish dramatic movement took its present form, I saw somebody must write a number of plays in prose if it was to have a good start. I did not know what to do. . . . You said I might dictate to you, and we worked in the mornings at Coole, and I never did anything that went so easily and quickly; for when I hesitated you had the right thought ready and it was almost always you who gave the right turn to the phrase and gave it the ring of daily life. We finished several plays . . . in so few weeks that if I were to say how few I do not think anybody would believe me."

— *Our Irish Theatre*

. . . In a lecture I gave last year on playwriting I said I had been forced to write comedy because it was wanted for our theatre, to put on at the end of the verse plays, but that I think tragedy is easier. For, I said, tragedy shows humanity in the grip of circumstance, of fate, of what our people call "the thing will happen". . . . You may let your hero kick or struggle, but he is in the claws all the time, it is a mere question as to how nearly you will let him escape, and when you will allow the pounce. Fate itself is the protagonist, your actor cannot carry much character, it is out of place. . . . But in comedy it is different. Character comes in, and why it is so I cannot explain, but as soon as one creates a character, he begins to put out little feet of his own and take his own way.

—*Collected Plays* I

. . . One has to go on with experiment or interest in creation fades, at least so it is with me.

— *Our Irish Theatre*

. . . the balance of weight, the minute calculating of it in advance, (as they say, the dome of St. Paul's was built on a sheet of paper), comes into the building of a play, as does "music" — the balanced delight of sentences — of words.

— *Collected Plays* IV

The Travelling Man

An old woman living in a cabin by a bog road on Slieve Echtge told me the legend on which this play is founded, and which I have already published in "Poets and Dreamers".

"There was a poor girl walking the road one night with no place to stop, and the Saviour met her on the road, and He said—'Go up to the house you see a light in; there's a woman dead there, and they'll let you in.' So she went, and she found the woman laid out, and the husband and other people; but she worked harder than they all, and she stopped in the house after; and after two quarters the man married her. And one day she was sitting outside the door, picking over a bag of wheat, and the Saviour came again, with the appearance of a poor man, and He asked her for a few grains of the wheat. And she said—'Wouldn't potatoes be good enough for you?' And she called to the girl within to bring out a few potatoes. But He took nine grains of the wheat in His hand and went away; and there wasn't a grain of wheat left in the bag, but all gone. So she ran after Him then to ask Him to forgive her; and she overtook Him on the road, and she asked forgiveness. And He said—'Don't you remember the time you had no house to go to, and I met you on the road, and sent you to a house where you'd live in plenty? And now you wouldn't give Me a few grains of wheat.' And she said—'But why didn't you give me a heart that would like to divide it?' That is how she came round on Him. And He said—'From this out, whenever you have plenty in your hands, divide it freely for My sake.' "

And an old woman who sold sweets in a little shop in Galway, and whose son become a great Dominican preacher, used to say—"Refuse not any, for one may be the Christ."

I owe the Rider's Song, and some of the rest to W. B. Yeats.

— *Collected Plays* III

Neither Mr. Yeats nor I take the writing of our plays lightly. We work hard to get clearly both fable and idea. *The Travelling Man* was first my idea and then we wrote it together. Then Mr. Yeats wrote a variant of it as a Pagan play, *The Black Horse*, and to this we owe the song, "There's many a strong framer whose heart would break in two." It did not please him however, and then I worked it out in my own way. I wrote to him: "I am not sure about your idea, for if the Stranger wanted the child to be content with the things near him, why did he make the image of the Garden of Paradise and ride to it? I am more inclined to think the idea is the soul having once seen the Christ, the Divine Essence, must always turn back to it again. One feels sure the child will through all its life. And the mother, with all her comforts, has never been quite satisfied, because she wants to see the Christ again. But the earthly side of her built up the dresser, and the child will build up other earthly veils, yet never be quite satisfied. What do you think?"

— *Our Irish Theatre*

Spreading the News

The idea of this play first came to me as a tragedy. I kept seeing as in a picture people sitting by the roadside, and a girl passing to the market, gay and fearless. And then I saw her passing by the same place at evening, her head hanging, the heads of others turned from her, because of some sudden story that had risen out of a chance word, and had snatched away her good name.

But comedy and not tragedy was wanted at our theatre to put beside the high poetic work, *The King's Threshold*, *The Shadowy Waters*, *On Baile's Strand*, *The Well of the Saints*; and I let laughter have its way with the little play. I was delayed in beginning it for a while, because I could only think of Bartley Fallon as dull-witted or silly or ignorant, and the handcuffs seemed too harsh a punishment. But one day by the sea at Duras a melancholy man who was telling me of the crosses he had gone through at home said—"But I'm thinking if I went to America, its long ago to-day I'd be dead. And it's a great expense for a poor man to be buried in America." Bartley was born at that moment, and, far from harshness, I felt I was providing him with a happy old age in giving him the lasting glory of that great and crowning day of misfortune.

It has been acted very often by other companies as well as our own, and the Boers have done me the honour of translating and pirating it.

Kincora

Kincora was the first historical play I wrote, and it gave me a great deal of trouble and I wrote many versions, for I had not enough of skill to wrestle with the mass of material, and I think I kept too closely to history. It was produced at the Abbey Theatre in 1905 in the old printed version. This new version was produced in 1909.

I hoped then and still hope that we may give a week or more in every year to a sequence of history plays, or perhaps play them at schools, that schoolboys and schoolgirls may have their imagination stirred about the people who made history, instead of knowing them but as names. But Brian's greatness lives always in the memory of the people, and Kincora is remembered in the song translated by Mangan from the Irish of one of Brian's own household:

> Oh, where, Kincora, is Brian the great? And where is the beauty that once was thine?
> Oh, where are the princes and nobles that sat at the feast in thy halls and drank the red wine?
>
> I am MacLiag and my home is on the lake; thither often to that palace whose beauty is dead
> Came Brian to ask me and I went for his sake. Oh my grief! that I should live and Brian be dead!

The summary given by modern histories is as follows:

"Two Kings gained lasting renown during the contests with the Norsemen, Malachi the Great, who became High King in 980, and Brian, King of the province of Munster. Brian in a battle fought in 968 at Sulcoit, north of the Galtee Mountains, defeated the Norsemen and put them to flight. This was the first of a series of victories against the raiders who from this time forward are generally spoken of as Danes, though they came from Norway as well as Denmark.

"Malachi, the High King, was at the same time making attacks on the invaders' settlements in Dublin and as far north as the Boyne. He took Dublin in 996, winning there among other spoils

the golden ring of the Danish chief. Two such strong personalities as Malachi and Brian, rulers of provinces which had long been rivals, could hardly be expected to live in brotherly union and concord. We find them constantly at strife, even when both were fighting against the common foe. They finally agreed to divide Ireland between them, Malachi taking the northern part and handing over the southern to Brian. This arrangement was made in 998, and not unnaturally gave great offence to the King of Leinster whose territory lay in the region assigned by Malachi to Brian. The King of Leinster made an alliance with the Danes of Dublin and determined to resist Brian's authority. Brian and Malachi immediately gathered an army and met and defeated the united armies of the King of Leinster and the Danes in one of the valleys of the Wicklow hills, Glenmama.

"Brian married Gormleith (Gormley), sister of the King of Leinster and widow of a former chief of the Danes, whose son Sitric was now their acknowledged leader. This alliance won over to Brian's side both the King of Leinster and the Danes of Dublin, and Brian presently felt strong enough to lead an army northward towards Tara to try conclusions with Malachi for the High Kingship of Ireland. Malachi recognised that his opponent was too strong for him and made his submission. This took place in the year 1002, and for the next twelve years, until he was slain at the battle of Clontarf, Brian was recognised as the High King of Ireland."

That is what the histories tell, and they tell also of the woman who walked all Ireland with a gold ring in her hand; though I have changed the rich clothes of the legend for rags, thinking them nearer to the inner meaning of the parable. As to the quarrel between Brian and the King of Leinster, the books say:

"As part of his tribute the Leinster King was bringing to Kincora three pine trees for ships' masts, and among the carriers some dispute arose as to who was to be in the first place. To end the dispute the King himself took the first place, and in his exertions in carrying the tree, one of the silver buttons of his tunic had been torn off. At Kincora he handed the tunic to his sister Gormleith, asking her to sew on the displaced button; but the lady, instead, heaped reproaches on him for being a mere vassal, and angrily flung the tunic into the fire. Her taunting words irritated Maelmora, and his irritation was soon shown. Looking on at a game of chess which was being played between Murrough and his cousin Conaing, Maelmora suggested a move which ended in Murrough

losing the game. Murrough angrily remarked, 'That was like the advice you gave the Danes which lost them Glenmama.' Maelmora with equal anger replied, 'I will now give them advice and they shall not be defeated.' 'Then' said Murrough, 'you had better remind them to have a yew tree ready for your reception.' For Maelmora had hidden in a yew tree after his defeat at Glenmama. In bitterness of heart and in secret Maelmora left Kincora. He decided to revolt and was joined by the Dublin Danes. The Battle of Clontarf was the result. Brian was killed there, and Maelmora, but the Danes were driven from Ireland for ever.

"In bringing together the Danes for Clontarf nobody had been more active than Gormleith. Since Maelmora's visit to Kincora she had been repudiated by Brian and had become so 'grim' against him that she wished him dead. She had sent her son Sitric to the Danish leaders to beg their assistance. The two best known of these leaders were Brodar, Earl of Man, and Sigurd, Earl of Orkney. Both made it a condition to be acknowledged King of Ireland if Brian were defeated and slain, and also to get Gormleith in marriage . . . though the latter was now old, and it is unlikely that they were attracted by her doubtful virtue or coveted her faded charms."

So far the histories, founded, one must think, on the legends of the people. Around Kincora such legends still linger. One is shown where Brian's palace was, and where the fish were caught for his use and told of all his cellars and strong-rooms and passages, some of them underground. And a man in armour is seen now and again on the roads near the green mound where the palace stood, who is, it may be, the walking shadow of the High King.

When *Kincora* was first produced in Dublin, an old farmer came all the way from Killaloe near Kincora to see it, and he went away sad because as he said "Brian ought not to have married that woman, but to have been content with a nice quiet girl from his own district."

As to the Danes, the people tell me, "The reason of the wisps and the fires on Saint John's Eve is that one time long ago the Danes came and took the country and conquered it, and they put a soldier to mind every house through the whole country. And at last the people made up their minds that on one night they would kill the soldiers. So they did as they said, and there wasn't one left, and that is why they light the wisps ever since. It was Brian Boroihme (Boru) was the first to light them. There was not much of an army left to the Danes that time, for he made a great scatter of them. A great man he was, and his own son was as good, that is

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too pious, and old, and she got tired of that." And I am told of the last battle. "Clontarf was on the head of a game of chess. The generals of the Danes were beaten at it, and they were vexed. It was Brodar, that the Brodericks are descended from, that put a dagger through Brian's heart, and he attending to his prayers. What the Danes left in Ireland were hens and weasels. And when the cock crows in the morning the country people will always say, 'It is for Denmark they are crowing; crowing they are to be back in Denmark!' "

But the Danes are often mixed up with the Tuatha de Danaan, the old gods, the invisible inhabitants of the forths, as in a story I have been told of the battle of Aughrim. "The Danes were dancing in the forths around Aughrim the night after the Battle. Their ancestors were driven out of Ireland before; and they were glad when they saw those that had put them out put out themselves, and every one of them skivered."

The small size of our stage and our small number of players forced me to do away with what our people call "the middling class," and I have used but servants and kings. As to their language, I have, to the grief of my printers, used the dialect spoken by many of my neighbours, who are though it may be by long descent, belonging to the families of kings.

— *Collected Plays* II

. . . Perhaps I ought to have written nothing but these short comedies, but desire for experiment is like fire in the blood, and I had had from the beginning a vision of historical plays being sent by us through all the counties of Ireland. For to have real success and to come into the life of the country, one must touch a real and eternal emotion, and history comes only next to religion in our country. . . . I still hope to see a little season given up every year to plays on history and in sequence at the Abbey, and I think schools and colleges may ask to have them sent and played in their halls, as a part of the day's lesson. I began with the daring and lightheartedness of a schoolboy to write a tragedy in three acts upon a great personality, Brian the High King. I made many bad beginnings, and if I had listened to Mr. Yeats's advice I should have given it up, but I began again and again till it was at last moulded in at least a possible shape.

— *Our Irish Theatre*

Hyacinth Halvey

I was pointed out one evening a well-brushed, well-dressed man in the stalls, and was told gossip about him, perhaps not all true, which made me wonder if that appearance and behaviour as of extreme respectability might not now and again be felt a burden.

After a while he translated himself in my mind into Hyacinth; and as one must set one's original a little way off to get a translation rather than a tracing, he found himself in Cloon, where, as in other parts of our country, "character" is built up or destroyed by a password or an emotion, rather than by experience and deliberation.

The idea was more of a universal one than I knew at the first, and I have had but uneasy appreciation from some apparently blameless friends.

— *Collected Plays* I

The Doctor in Spite of Himself

The Doctor in Spite of Himself is now played with all the "business", traditional from Molière, sent to us through the courtesy of a principal actor of the Comédie Française. We had not this "business" in time for our first production of the Play, but it does not greatly differ from that invented by Mr. William Fay. One of the Dublin papers was shocked at the roughness and simplicity of the Play, and the writer of the article, although he admitted he had never read Molière's text, accused us of putting these things into it. Now it is precisely this roughness and simplicity, as of some old humorous folk-tale, that has made it a world-famous masterpiece, for it can be translated into almost any language, or adapted into any social order that is not too complex. I saw in some paper the other day that it is popular in Persia.

— *Collected Plays* IV

. . . We wanted to put on some of Molière's plays. They seemed akin to our own. But when one translation after another was tried, it did not seem to carry, to "go across the footlights". So I tried putting one into our own Kiltartan dialect, *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and it went very well. I went on, therefore, and translated *Scapin* and *The Miser*.

— *Our Irish Theatre*

The Gaol Gate

I was told a story some one had heard, of a man who had gone to welcome his brother coming out of gaol, and heard he had died there before the gates had been opened for him.

I was going to Galway, and at the Gort station I met two cloaked and shawled countrywomen from the slopes of Slieve Echtge, who were obliged to go and see some law official in Galway because of some money left them by a kinsman in Australia. They had never been in a train or to any place farther than a few miles from their own village, and they felt astray and terrified "like blind beasts in a bog" they said, and I took care of them through the day.

An agent was fired at on the road from Athenry, and some men were taken up on suspicion. One of them was a young carpenter from my old home, and in a little time a rumour was put about that he had informed against the others in Galway gaol. When the prisoners were taken across the bridge to the court-house he was hooted by the crowd. But at the trial it was found that he had not informed, that no evidence had been given at all; and bonfires were lighted for him as he went home.

These three incidents coming within a few months wove themselves into this little play, and within three days it had written itself, or been written. I like it better than any in the volume, and I have never changed a word of it.

— *Collected Plays* II

The Rising of the Moon

Tomas O'Concannon, once Gaelic League Organiser, greeted me and sat beside me and I told him he was in part responsible for the play. He was astonished but I reminded him of an evening when he had come to Coole, very late, his bicycle having broken down. Hyde was with us, and others, but we had a room made ready for him. And he had told us of a policeman who had helped him to mend the bicycle and who seemed to have National sympathies under his tunic. Tomas, when I said this, started — said he remembered all perfectly — it was close to Kinvara that talk with the policeman had taken place.

— Lady Gregory's journal
23 April 1929

. . . Mary Sheridan [Lady Gregory's childhood nurse] had lived also in the family of Hamilton Rowan the rebel, and would tell of his escape in a boat and his uneasiness lest the boatmen would recognise him, for there was a reward upon his head; and how they had indeed recognised him, but had told him that he was safe with them whatever might be the offered reward.

— *Seventy Years*

The Rising of the Moon

When I was a child and came with my elders to Galway for their salmon fishing in the river that rushes past the gaol, I used to look with awe at the window where men were hung, and the dark, closed gate. I used to wonder if ever a prisoner might by some means climb the high, buttressed wall and slip away in the darkness by the canal to the quays and find friends to hide him under a load of kelp in a fishing boat, as happens to my ballad-singing man. The play was considered offensive to some extreme Nationalists before it was acted, because it showed the police in too favourable a light, and a Unionist paper attacked it after it was acted because the policeman was represented "as a coward and a traitor"; but after the Belfast police strike that same paper praised its "insight into Irish character." After all these ups and downs it passes unchallenged on both sides of the Irish Sea.

— *Collected Plays* II

Dervorgilla

. . . *Dervorgilla* I wrote at a time when circumstances had forced us to accept an English stage-manager for the Abbey. I was very strongly against this. I felt as if I should be spoken of some day as one who had betrayed her country's trust.

—*Our Irish Theatre*

Dervorgilla, daughter of the King of Meath, wife of O'Rourke, King of Breffny, was taken away, willingly or unwillingly by Diarmuid MacMurrough, King of Leinster, in the year 1152. O'Rourke and his friends invaded Leinster in revenge, and in the wars which followed, Diarmuid, driven from Ireland, appealed for help to Henry II of England, and was given an army under Strongbow, to whom Diarmuid promised Leinster as reward. It is so the English were first brought into Ireland. Dervorgilla, having outlived

O'Rourke and Diarmuid and Henry and Strongbow, is said to have died at the Abbey of Mellifont, near Drogheda, in the year 1193, aged 85.

That is how the story is told in the histories. And I have heard in Kiltartan: "Dervorgilla was a red-haired woman, and it was she put the great curse on Ireland, bringing in the English through MacMurrough, that she went to from O'Rourke. It was to Henry the Second MacMurrough went, and he sent Strongbow, and they stopped in Ireland ever since. But who knows but another race might be worse, such as the Spaniards that were scattered along the whole coast of Connacht at the time of the Armada? And the laws are good enough. I heard it said the English will be dug out of their graves one day for the sake of their law. As to Dervorgilla, she was not brought away by force, she went to MacMurrough herself. For there are men in the world that have a coaxing way, and sometimes women are weak."

The Workhouse Ward

I heard of an old man in the workhouse who had been disabled many years before by, I think, a knife thrown at him by his wife in some passionate quarrel.

One day I heard the wife had been brought in there, poor and sick. I wondered how they would meet, and if the old quarrel was still alive, or if they who knew the worst of each other would be better pleased with one another's company than with that of strangers.

I wrote a scenario of the play, Dr. Douglas Hyde getting in plot what he gave back in dialogue, for at that time we thought a dramatic movement in Irish would be helpful to our own as well as to the Gaelic League. Later I tried to rearrange it for our own theatre, and for three players only, but in doing this I found it necessary to write entirely new dialogue, the two old men in the original play obviously talking at an audience in the wards, which is no longer there.

I sometimes think the two scolding paupers are a symbol of ourselves in Ireland—

—"it is better to be quarrelling than to be lonesome."

— *Collected Plays* I

. . . This is how I wrote down my fable: "Scene, ward of a workhouse; two beds containing the old men; they are quarrelling. Occupants of other invisible beds are heard saying, "There they are at it again; they are always quarrelling." They say the matron will be coming to call for order, but another says the matron has been sent for to see somebody who wants to remove one of the paupers. Both old men wish they could be removed from each other and have the whole ridge of the world between them. The fight goes on. One old man tells the other that he remembers the time he used to be stealing ducks, and he a boy at school. The other old man remembers the time his neighbour was suspected of going to Souper's school, etc., etc. They remember the crimes of each other's lives. They fight like two young whelps that go on fighting till they are two old dogs. At last they take their pillows and throw them at each other. Other paupers (invisible) cheer and applaud. Then they take their porringers, pipes, prayer-books, or whatever is in reach, to hurl at each other. They lament the hard fate that has put them in the same ward for five years and in beds next to each other for the last three months, and they after being enemies the whole of their lives. Suddenly a cry that the matron is coming. They settle themselves hurriedly. Each puts his enemy's pillow under his head and lies down. The matron comes in with a countrywoman comfortably dressed. She embraces one old man. She is his sister. Her husband died from her lately and she is lonesome and doesn't like to think of her brother being in the workhouse. If he is bedridden itself, he would be company for her. He is delighted, asks what sort of house she has. She says, a good one, a nice kitchen, and he can be doing little jobs for her. He can be sitting in a chair beside the fire and stirring the stirabout for her and throwing a bit of food to the chickens when she is out in the field. He asks when he can go. She says she has the chance of a lift for him on a neighbour's cart. He can come at once. He says he will make no delay. A loud sob from the old man in the other bed. He says, "Is it going away you are, you that I knew through all my lifetime, and leaving me with strangers?" The first old man asks his sister if she will bring him too. She is indignant, says she won't. First old man says maybe he'd be foolish to go at all. How does he know if he'd like it. She says, he is to please himself; if he doesn't come, she can easily get a husband, having, as she has, a nice way of living, and three lambs going to the next market. The first man says, well, he won't go. She

turns her back angrily. Paupers in other beds call out she'll find a good husband amongst them. She pulls on her shawl scornfully to go away. She gives her brother one more chance; he says he won't go. She says good-bye and bad luck to him. She leaves. He says that man beyond would be lonesome with no one to contradict him. The other man says he would not. The first man says, "You want some one to be arguing with you always." The second man, "I do not." The first man says. "You are at your lies again." The second takes up his pillow to heave at him again. Curtain falls on two men arming themselves with pillows."

I intended to write the full dialogue myself, but Mr. Yeats thought a new Gaelic play more useful for the moment, and rather sadly I laid that part of the work upon Dr. Hyde. It was all for the best in the end, for the little play, when we put it on at the Abbey, did not go very well. It seemed to ravel out into loose ends, and we did not repeat it. . . . After a while, . . . with Dr. Hyde's full leave I re-wrote the *Poorhouse* as *The Workhouse Ward*. I had more skill by that time, and it was a complete re-writing, for the two old men in the first play had been talking at an imaginary audience of other old men in the ward. When this was done away with the dialogue became of great necessity more closely knit, more direct and personal, to the great advantage of the play.

— *Our Irish Theatre*

Grania

I think I turned to Grania because so many have written about sad, lovely Deirdre, who when overtaken by sorrow made no good battle at the last. Grania had more power of will, and for good or evil twice took the shaping of her life into her own hands. The riddle she asks us through the ages is, "Why did I, having left great grey-haired Finn for comely Diarmuid, turn back to Finn in the end, when he had consented to Diarmuid's death?" And a question tempts one more than the beaten path of authorised history. If I have held but lightly to the legend, it is not because I do not know it, for in *Gods and Fighting Men* I have put together and rejected many versions. For the present play I have taken but enough of the fable on which to set, as on a sod of grass, the three lovers, one of whom had to die. I suppose it is that "fascination of things difficult" that has tempted me to write a three-act play with only three characters. Yet where Love itself, with its shadow Jealousy, is the true protagonist I could not feel that more were needed. When I told Mr. Yeats I had but these three persons in the

play, he said incredulously, "They must have a great deal to talk about." And so they have, for the talk of lovers is inexhaustible, being of themselves and one another.

As to the Fianna, the Fenians, I have heard their story many a time from my neighbours, old men who have drifted into workhouses, seaweed gatherers on the Burren Coast, turf-cutters on Slieve Echtge, and the like. For though the tales that have gathered around that mysterious race are thought by many to come from the earliest days, even before the coming of the Aryan Celt, the people of the West have a very long memory. And these tales are far better remembered than those of the Red Branch, and this, it is suggested, is part proof of their having belonged to the aboriginal race. Cuchulain's bravery, and Deirdre's beauty "that brought the Sons of Usnach to their death" find their way, indeed, into the folk-poetry of all the provinces; but the characters of the Fianna, Grania's fickleness, and Conan's bitter tongue, and Oisin's gentleness to his friends and his keen wit in the arguments with St. Patrick, and Goll's strength, and Osgar's high bravery, and Finn's wisdom, that was beyond that of earth, are as well known as the characteristics of any noticeable man of modern times.

An old man I talked with on the beach beyond Kinvara told me, "They were very strong in those days, and six or seven feet high. I was digging the potato garden one day about forty years ago, and down in the dyke the spade struck against something, and it was the bones of a man's foot, and it was three feet long. I brought away one bone of it myself, and the man that was along with me, but we buried it after. It was the foot of one of those men. They had every one six or seven dogs, and first they would set two of the dogs to fight, and then they'd fight themselves. And they'd go to all countries in curraghs that were as strong as steamers; to Spain they went in their curraghs. They went across from this hill of Burren to Connemara one time, and the sea opened to let them pass. There are no men like them now; the Connemara men are the best, but even with them, if there was a crowd of them together, and you to throw a stick over their heads, it would hardly hit one, they are mostly all the one height, and no one a few inches taller than another."

Another man says, "They were all strong men in those times; and one time Finn and his men went over to Granagh to fight the men there, and it was the time of the harvest, and what they fought with was sheaves, and every one that got a blow of a sheaf got his death. There is one of them buried now in Fardy Whelan's hill,

and there's two headstones, and my father often measured the grave, and he said it is seven yards long."

On Slieve Echtge I was told, "Oisin and Finn took the lead for strength, and Samson, too, he had great strength." "I would rather hear about the Irish strong men," said I. "Well, and Samson was of the Irish race, all the world was Irish in those times, and he killed the Philistines, and the eyes were picked out of him after. He was said to be the strongest, but I think myself Finn MacCumhail was tronger." And again, "It was before the flood those strong men lived here, Finn and Oisin and the others, and they lived longer than people do now, three or four hundred years.

"Giants they were; Conan was twelve feet high, and he was the smallest. But ever since, people are getting smaller and smaller, and will till they come to the end; but they are wittier and more crafty than they were in the old days, for the giants were innocent though they were so strong."

I hear sometimes of "a small race and dark, and that carried the bag," and that was probably the aboriginal one. "There was a low-sized race came, that worked the land of Ireland a long time; they had their time like the others." And, "Finn was the last of the giants, the tall strong men. It was after that the Lochlannachs came to the country. They were very small, but they were more crafty than the giants, and they used to be humbugging them. One time they got a sack and filled it with sand, and gave it to one of the Fianna to put on his back to try him. But he lifted it up, and all he said was, 'It is grain sowed in February it is.' " Another says, "An old man that was mending the wall of the house used to be telling stories about the strong men of the old time; very small they were, about three feet high, but they were very strong for all that."

Grania is often spoken of as belonging to that small race, as if her story had come from a very early time. "She was very small, only four feet. She was the heiress of the princes of Ireland, and that is why they were after her." "They say Diarmuid and Grania were very small. They made the big cromlechs, there's a slab on the one near Crusheen, sixteen men couldn't lift, but they had *their own way* of doing it." And again, "Diarmuid and Grania were very small and very thick." Another says, "Grania was low-sized; and people now are handsomer than the people of the old time, but they haven't such good talk."

I do not know if it is because of Grania's breach of faith, that I never hear her spoken of with sympathy, and her name does not come into the songs as Deirdre's does. A blind piper told me,

"Some say Grania was handsome, and some say she was ugly, there's a saying in Irish for that." And an old basket-maker was scornful and said, "Many would tell you Grania slept under the cromlechs, but I don't believe that, and she a king's daughter. And I don't believe she was handsome either. If she was, why would she have run away?"

An old woman says, "Finn had more wisdom than all the men in the world, but he wasn't wise enough to put a bar on Grania. It was huts with big stones Grania made, that are called cromlechs now; they made them when they went away into the wilderness."

And again I was told at Moycullen, near Lough Corrib, "As they were passing a stream, the water splashed on Grania, and she said 'Diarmuid was never so near to me as that.' "

The Golden Apple

I long had it in my mind to write a play for children, put together from the folk-tales and fairy tales of Ireland. But I did not want troublesome staging, and it was not till I saw the production of *The Yellow Jacket* that I knew how simply and swiftly changes of scene could be made. If we had put on *The Golden Apple* at the Abbey Theatre, I should have needed for the garden scene little but a well head and a little tree, and that could have been a front scene masking the King's bedchamber. The Wood of Wonders is made by the waving of boughs by the Witch and her daughter; and the Giant wants but a step-ladder and a pair of stilts. The cat disguise is always put on out of sight, and need only be head and paws, and a long-tailed grey gown. But I cannot put the play on in Dublin this year, for our earnings have lessened, so that to keep the Company together we have had to send them playing at music halls till better times come with the ending of the war.

We call grey plover filibines, and starlings stairs, and little fish pinkeens, and little sticks kippeens, and hazel rods scollops, in our everyday talk at Kiltartan.

The Story brought by Brigit

Last year in looking through old letters I found one from W. B. Yeats, in which he said that Father Hegarty, a priest beloved by the people of Mayo, had said to A.E. that if a passion play should be written (for we were then at the beginning of our dramatic movement) he would be glad to have it put on in his parish. Yeats

had then, and later, urged me to work at this. But it was only last summer, when my life seemed to have drifted into a quiet backwater, and I was much alone, that the great subject took hold of me, and so filled my mind that I was forced to get it into words, and into the form I am most used to, of a play.

I knew I could best write it through the voice, as it were, of our own people, and so I have given the story as I think it might have been told by Brigit, "the Mary of the Gael," our great Saint, had she been present during the last days of Him who, tradition tells us, she cherished in his early days. Gaelic Scotland in its folklore makes her the serving maid at the Inn of Bethlehem; but in Ireland it brings the Holy Mother and Child to our own country. Brigit, "shining flame of gold, right foster-mother of Christ," comes often into the hymns and incantations of the Scottish Highlands. "The encompassment of Mary and of Brigit" is asked on herds of cattle and on milking and on churning. She tended sheep, and her protection as "Brigit the fostermother," is asked for the flocks, "to keep them from strangers and from harm," and "from the straight arrows of the women of the sidhe"—the fairy women. "May gentle Mary keep the sheep, may calm Brigit keep them, on the soft land, on the hard land, from the fox and from the wolf." The two names are constantly put together, "calm, generous Brigit," "mild, loving Mary." And in the dedication, the binding, of the young hunter "not to kill a bird sitting, or a beast lying down," he was bade remember "the fairy swan of Brigit of the flocks; the fairy duck of Mary of Peace."

Here in Connacht on her day, the 1st of February, "the blessed Crosses are made of straw, and are put up in the thatch, and the first of the birds begin to make their nests, for the death of the year is done with, and the birthday of the year is begun."

As to the curse put upon Daniel in the play, I wondered sometimes why our country people who are so kind to one another, and to tramps and beggars, that they seem to live by the rule of that old woman in a Galway sweet shop, the mother of the great preacher, Father Burke, "Refuse not any, for one may be the Christ," shun as they do that wandering tribe, tinkers—as they call them, gipsies they may be—who spend their days going along the roads in carts, and sleep at night under their cart, or by the side of a wall. "Some of them that do smith's work are middling decent," I was told; "but the most of them have no trade, but to be going to fairs and doing tricks, and having a table for getting money out of you with games."

"They never go to Mass, they have no religion, or, if they have, it is a wandering one, wandering like themselves." "There was one I knew, I told him I wondered they wouldn't settle down in one place; for if I knew the way to make money, I said, I would make plenty. For they are said to coin money. But he said it made no difference if they had money; they couldn't stop in one place; they must be walking always, and going through the whole country." And then I was given a reason for this ceaseless wandering. "There are some say that when our Lord was on the Cross there could be no tradesman found to drive the nails in his hands and feet till a tinker was brought, and he did it; and that is why they have to walk the world. And I never met anyone that had seen a tinker's funeral."

— *Collected Plays* IV

Dave

. . . Perhaps I may do another play after all. I wish I could get that idea I am trying to live in "instead of striving to get to Heaven striving to bring Heaven about us on Earth" into dramatic shape.

— Lady Gregory's journal
18 October 1924

. . . Another good night, awakening sometimes but happily and without pain. And suddenly I seemed to get the play *Dave* clearly, a ragged woman coming into the house through a storm, faints, believes when revived that she is in heaven and brings the others something to the mind of "dwellers in that high country." It seemed to flatten as I wrote it down this morning, yet I think it is the framework I want.

— Lady Gregory's journal
26 March 1925

A thought long dwelling in my mind and that I had heard put by a poor woman in a workhouse into such simple words as, "There is no child comes into the world but brings with him some grain of wisdom of Heaven," was brought nearer to dramatic expression when I saw in the *Irish Statesman* a poem by its Editor, A.E., who

has allowed me to print it here and to dedicate the little play to him:

"The Gods have taken alien shapes upon them
Wild peasants driving swine
In a strange country. Through the swarthy faces
The starry faces shine.

Under grey tattered skies they strain and reel there;
But cannot all disguise
The majesty of fallen gods, the beauty,
The fire beneath their eyes.

They huddle at night within low, clay-built cabins,
And, to themselves unknown,
They carry with them diadem and sceptre
And move from throne to throne."

The verses sung by Kate are from an old hymn given in the *Oxford Book of English Verse* as "Song of Mary, Mother of Christ," with the date 1608. I have seen it elsewhere with an earlier date, and attributed to St. Augustine.

FIRST PERFORMANCES AT THE ABBEY THEATRE

The following plays in this Volume have been performed at the Abbey Theatre and the casts and the date of the first productions are given below:

Spreading The News

27th December 1904

Bartley Fallon	W. G. Fay
Mrs. Fallon	Sara Allgood
Mrs. Tully	Emma Vernon
Mrs. Tarpey	Maire Ni Gharbhaigh
Shawn Early	J. H. Dunne
Tim Casey	George Roberts
James Ryan	Arthur Sinclair
Jack Smith	P. MacShlibhlaigh
A Policeman	R. S. Nash
A Removable Magistrate	F. J. Fay

Hyacinth Halvey

19th February 1906

Hyacinth Halvey	F. J. Fay
James Quirke, a butcher	W. G. Fay
Fardy Farrell, a telegraph boy	Arthur Sinclair
Sergeant Carden	Walter Magee
Mrs. Delane, Postmistress at Cloon	Sara Allgood
Miss Joyce, the Priest's housekeeper	Brigit O'Dempsey

The Doctor in Spite of Himself—Molière

16th April 1906

Sganarelle	W. G. Fay
Martha, his wife	Sara Allgood
Robert, his neighbour	Arthur Sinclair
Valere, servant of Geronte	A. Power
Luke, the same	U. Wright
Geronte, father of Lucy	F. J. Fay
Jacqueline, nurse at Geronte's and wife of Luke	Maire O'Neill
Lucy, daughter of Geronte	Brigit O'Dempsey
Leeane, Lucy's lover	Arthur Sinclair

The Gaol Gate

20th October 1906

Mary Cahel	Sara Allgood
Mary Cushin	Maire O'Neill
The Gatekeeper	F. J. Fay

The Rising of the Moon

9th March 1907

Sergeant	Arthur Sinclair
Policeman X	J. A. O'Rourke
Policeman B	J. M. Kerrigan
A Ragged Man	W. G. Fay

In the programme of the first performance the *Sergeant* is described as *Policeman Z* and *A Ragged Man* as *Ballad Singer*.

Dervorgilla

31st October 1907

Dervorgilla	Sara Allgood
Mona	Maire O'Neill
Mamie	Brigit O'Dempsey
Flann	F. J. Fay
Songmaker	W. G. Fay
A Boy	Arthur Sinclair
Another	J. M. Kerrigan
Another	J. A. O'Rourke

The Workhouse Ward

20th April 1908

Mike McInerney	Arthur Sinclair
Michael Miskell	Fred O'Donovan
Mrs. Donohue	Maire O'Neill

Kincora (final version)
11th February 1909

Brian	Arthur Sinclair
Maelmora	Sydney J. Morgan
Malachi	Ambrose Power
Sitric	U. Wright
Murrough	Fred O'Donovan
Brennain	J. M. Kerrigan
Rury	J. H. Dunne
Phelan	J. A. O'Rourke
Gormleith	Sara Allgood
Beggar	Maire O'Neill

The Travelling Man
3rd March 1910

Mother	Sara Allgood
Child	Elinor Moore
Travelling Man	Fred O'Donovan

The Golden Apple
6th January 1920

The King	Peter Nolan
Rury, his son	F. J. McCormick
The Doctor	Eric Gorman
Simon the Steward	Barry Fitzgerald
The Witch	Christine Hayden
Pampogue, her daughter	Esme Ward
The Giant	Hugh Nagle
Briget, his wife	Maureen Delany
The Cook	Michael Dolan
The Barber	Bryan Herbert
The Gardener	Arthur Shields
Muireann, the Enchanted Princess	Eithne Magee

Strangers, Servants, etc.: J. J. Lynch, T. Quinn, Jas. Mahon, H. L. Corrigan, P. Kirwan, J. D. Brennan, etc.

The Story Brought by Brigit

April 1924 (Holy Week)

Joel	Arthur Shields
Daniel	Michael J. Dolan
Marcus	Maurice Esmonde
Silas	Barry Fitzgerald
Pilate	F. J. McCormick
Judas Iscariot	Eric Gorman
St. John	P. J. Carolan
St. Brigit	Christine Hayden
First Woman	Sara Allgood
Second Woman	Maureen Delaney
Third Woman	Eileen O'Kelly
First Man	Peter Nolan
Second Man	Bernard Swan
First Soldier	Gabriel J. Fallon
Second Soldier	F. J. McCormick
Third Soldier	Tony Quinn
A Young Scribe	Gabriel J. Fallon
An Egyptian Nurse	May Craig
The Mother	Eileen Crowe
The Christ	Lyle Donaghy

Dave

May 9th, 1927

Nicholas O'Cahan	Michael J. Dolan
Kate O'Cahan	Maureen Delany
Timothy Loughlin	P. J. Carolan
Josephine Loughlin	K. Curling
Dave	J. Stephenson

Grania has not yet been produced.

A SELECTED CHECKLIST
compiled by Colin Smythe

Plays

Seven Short Plays (Spreading the News, Hyacinth Halvey, The Rising of the Moon, The Jackdaw, The Workhouse Ward, The Travelling Man, The Gaol Gate) Maunsel & Co., Dublin 1909. There were many later printings.

The Kiltartan Molière (The Miser, The Doctor in Spite of Himself, The Rogueries of Scapin), Maunsel & Co., Dublin, 1910.

Irish Folk History Plays, first and second series (Grania, Kincora, Dervorgilla; The Canavans, The White Cockade, The Deliverer), G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1912.

New Comedies (The Bogie Men, The Full Moon, Coats, Damer's Gold, McDonough's Wife), G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1913.

The Golden Apple, John Murray, London and G. P. Putnam's Sons New York, 1916.

The Dragon, Talbot Press, Dublin, and G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1920.

The Image and Other Plays (The Image, Hanrahan's Oath, Shanwalla, The Wrens), G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1922.

Three Wonder Plays (The Dragon, Aristotle's Bellows, The Jester, G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1923.

The Story Brought by Brigit, G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1924.

Mirandolina, G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1924.

On the Racecourse, G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1926.

Three Last Plays (Sancho's Master, Dave, The Would-Be Gentleman), G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1928.

My First Play (Colman and Guaire), Elkin Mathews and Marrot, London, 1930.

Selected Plays, selected by Elizabeth Coxhead, Putnam, London, 1962.

Collected Plays, edited by Ann Saddlemyer, Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, and Oxford University Press, New York, 1971. Coole Edition volumes 5-8. Issued in paper covers in 1979.

1. *The Comedies.* (Twenty Five, Spreading the News, The Rising of the Moon, The Jackdaw, The Workhouse Ward, The Bogie Men, Coats, Damer's Gold, Hanrahan's Oath, The Wrens, On the Racecourse, Michelin, The Meadow Gate, The Dispensary, The Shoelace, The Lighted Window, A Losing Game.)
2. *The Tragedies.* (The Gaol Gate, Grania, Kincora, Dervorgilla, McDonough's Wife.)
   The Tragic-Comedies. (The Image, The Canavans, The White Cockade, The Deliverer.)
   The Old Woman Remembers.
3. *Wonder and the Supernatural.* (Colman and Guaire, The Travelling Man, The Full Moon, Shanwalla, The Golden Apple, The Jester, The Dragon, Aristotle's Bellows, The Story Brought by Brigit, Dave.)
4. *Translations and Adaptations.* (Teja, The Doctor in Spite of Himself, The Rogueries of Scapin, The Miser, The Would-Be Gentleman, Mirandolina, Sancho's Master.)
   Collaborations. With Douglas Hyde: The Poorhouse. With W. B. Yeats: The Unicorn from the Stars, Heads or Harps.)

For the complete collection of Lady Gregory's translations of Douglas Hyde's plays into English, see *Poets and Dreamers*, Coole Edition 11.

Prose

Arabi and His Household, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., London, 1882.

Over the River, William Ridgway, London, 1888.

A Phantom's Pilgrimage, or Home Rule, William Ridgway, London, 1893.

Cuchulain of Muirthemne, John Murray, London, 1902, and Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1903.

Poets and Dreamers, John Murray, London, and Hodges Figgis, Dublin, 1903.

Gods and Fighting Men, John Murray, London, and Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1904.

A Book of Saints and Wonders, Dun Emer Press, Dundrum, Co. Dublin, 1906, enlarged version, John Murray, London, 1907.

The Kiltartan History Book, Maunsel & Co., Dublin, 1909, enlarged edition, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1926.
The Kiltartan Wonder Book, Maunsel & Co., Dublin, 1910.
Our Irish Theatre, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1913.
The Kiltartan Poetry Book, Cuala Press, Dundrum, 1918, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1919.
Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1920.
Hugh Lane's Life and Achievement, John Murray, London, and E. P. Dutton, New York, 1921.
Case for the Return of Hugh Lane's Pictures to Dublin, The Talbot Press, Dublin, 1926.
Coole, Cuala Press, Dublin, 1931. Enlarged edition edited by Colin Smythe with a foreword by Edward Malins, Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1971.
Lady Gregory's Journals edited by Lennox Robinson, Putnam, London, 1946, Macmillan, New York, 1947.
(*Shorter Writings,* in two volumes, should be published in 1984. It will include *Arabi and His Household, Over the River, A Phantom's Pilgrimage, or Home Ruin,* An Emigrant's Notebook, Our Boys in India, Glimpses of the Soudan, Coole, Through Portugal, Tree Planting, her anonymous articles about the Troubles — A Week in Ireland, etc., Sir Frederic Burton, How Great Plays are Born: The Coming of Mr O'Casey, Eothen and the Athenaeum Club, Mistral; the Craoibhin of Provence, Living Legends of the Saints, Living Legends of the Fianna, Legends of the Raths, Ireland in Bond Street, and her poetry, as well as over fifty more articles and reviews.)

Works Edited by Lady Gregory

Sir William Gregory, An Autobiography, John Murray, London, 1894.
Mr. Gregory's Letter-Box, 1813-35, Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1898.
Ideals in Ireland, At the Unicorn, London, 1901.

The Coole Edition
General Editors T. R. Henn and Colin Smythe.
Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, and Oxford University Press, New York, 1970–

1. *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland,* 1970.
2. *Cuchulain of Muirthemne,* 1970.
3. *Gods and Fighting Men,* 1970.
4. *Our Irish Theatre,* 1973.
5-8. *Collected Plays,* 1971.
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For a complete list of Lady Gregory's known contributions to periodicals (excluding interviews) see *Lady Gregory, Fifty Years After.*

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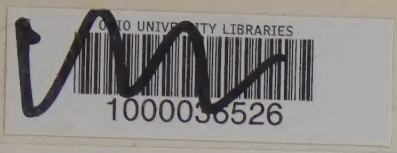

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Selected plays of Lady Gregory